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in Ancient India

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Brāhmaṇas
in Ancient India

A STUDY IN THE ROLE OF THE BRĀHMAṆA CLASS
FROM *C.* 200 BC TO *C.* AD 500

by
Govind Prasad Upadhyay
M.A., Ph.D.

Munshiram Manoharlal
Publishers Pvt. Ltd.

Dedicated
to
my parents
Pt. Shri Ram Sharma
and
Smt. Madhavi Devi

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ABBREVIATIONS

ABORI	Annals of Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute
ABr.	Aitareya Brāhmaṇa
ADM	Aśoka and the Decline of the Mauryas
ĀDS	Āpastamba Dharma Sūtra
Ag. P. or Agni P.	Agni Purāṇa
AHIPI	A History of Indian Political Ideas
AICL	Ancient India As Described in Classical Literature
AIHT	Ancient Historical Tradition
AIU	The Age of Imperial Unity
Aṅg. Nik.	Aṅguttara Nikāya
APIIAI	Aspects of Political Ideas and Institutions in Ancient India
ASIAR	Archaeological Survey of India Annual Report
AEV	Aspects of Early Viṣṇuism
ASPSM	Aspects of the Social and Political System of Manusmṛti
ĀpŚSūt.	Āpastamba Śrauta Sūtra
ĀŚSūt.	Āśvalāyana Śrauta Sūtra
Āśva. Gṛ. Sūtra	Āśvalāyana Gṛhya Sūtra
ASWI	Archaeological Survey of Western India
AV	Atharvaveda
Avadāna Śat.	Avadāna Śataka
Bau. Gṛ. Sūtra	Baudhāyana Gṛhya Sūtra
Bḍ. P.	Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa
BDS	Baudhāyana Dharma Sūtra
BE	Bombay Edition
Bhāg. P.	Bhāgavata Purāṇa
Bhav. P.	Bhaviṣya Purāṇa
BMCCAI	Catalogue of Coins of Ancient India in British Museum
BMCAWK	British Museum Catalogue of the Coins of the Andhra Dynasty, Western Kshatrapa Dynasty, The Traikūṭaka Dynasty, and the Bodhi Dynasty
Brahma P.	Brahma Purāṇa

Bṛ. Up.	Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad
BSOAS	Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies
BŚSūt.	Baudhāyana Śrauta Sūtra
CHI	Cambridge History of India
Ch. Up.	Chandogya Upaniṣad
CII	Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum
CRI	Castes and Races in India
Crit. E.	Critical Edition
D Bud. or D. Bud.	Dialogues of Buddha
DHI	Development of Hindu Iconography
DKA	Dynasties of the Kali Age
Dīg. Nik.	Dīgha Nikāya
Divyā.	Divyāvadāna
EBr.	Encyclopaedia Britanica
EC	Epigraphia Carnatica
Ed.	Edited by, Editor, and Edition
EHD	Early History of Deccan
EHI	Early History of India
EHNI	Early History of North India
EI	Epigraphia Indica
EM	Epic Mythology
ERE	Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics
ESS	Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences
Garuḍa P.	Garuḍa Purāṇa
GDS	Gautama Dharma Sūtra
Gītā.	Bhagavadgīta
Gobh. Gṛ. Sūtra	Gobhila Gṛhya Sūtra
HAI	Hindu Administration Institutions
HDA	History and Doctrine of Ājīvikas
HDŚ	History of Dharmaśāstras
HIIA	History of Indian and Indonesian Art
HIL	History of Indian Literature
Hir. Gṛ. Sūtra	Hiraṇyakesin Gṛhya Sūtra
HSL	History of Sanskrit Literature
HOS	Harvard Oriental Series
HP	Hindu Polity
HSO	Hindu Social Organisation
HV. P.	Harivaṃśa Purāṇa
IA	Indian Antiquary
IB	Inscriptions of Bengal
IC	Indian Culture
IESS	International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences
IHC (Proc.)	Indian History Congress Proceedings
IHQ	Indian Historical Quarterly
Iśāv. Up.	Iśāvāsya Upaniṣad

ISIH	An Introduction to the Study of Indian History
Jābāla Up.	Jābāla Upaniṣad
JAOS	Journal of American Oriental Society
JASB	Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal
Jāt.	Jātaka
JBAS	Journal of Bengal Asiatic Society
JBBRAS	Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society
JBORS	Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society
JBRS	Journal of the Bihar Research Society
JDL	Journal of the Department of Letters
JGRI	Journal of the Ganganath Jha Research Institute
JNSI	Journal of the Numismatic Socieiy of India
JPASB	Journal and Proceedings of the Asiatic Society of Bengal
JRAS	Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland
JRASB	Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal
JUBr.	Jaiminiya Upaniṣad Brahmāṇa
JUPHS	Journal of the United Provinces Historical Society
KArth.	Kauṭilīya Arthaśāstra or Kauṭilya's Arthaśāstra
Kāth. Gr. Sūtra	Kaṭhaka Gṛhya Sūtra
Kaṭha Up.	Kaṭha Upaniṣad
Kauṣi. Gṛ. Sūtra	Kauṣītaka Gṛhya Sūtra
KBr.	Kauṣītakī Brāhmaṇa
KBr. Up.	Kauṣitakī Brāhmaṇa Upaniṣad
KSaṃ.	Kāṭhaka Saṃhitā
KŚSūt.	Kātyāyana Śrauta Sūtra
Kūrma P.	Kūrma Purāṇa
Laug. Gṛ. Sūtra	Laugākṣi Gṛhya Sūtra
LŚSūt.	Lāṭyāyana Śrauta Sūtra
Lāṭ. Gṛ. Sūtra	Lāṭyāyana Gṛhya Sūtra
Lalita.	Lalitavistara
Mahābh.	Mahābhāṣya of Patañjali
Maj. Nik.	Majjhima Nikāya
Mālavikāg.	Mālavikāgnimitra
Manu.	Mamusmṛti
Mār. P.	Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa
MASI	Memoires of the Archaeological Survey of India
Mat. P.	Matsya Purāṇa
Mbh.	Mahābhārata
Milinda.	Milindapañho
Mit.	Mitākṣarā
MSaṃ.	Maitrāyaṇī Saṃhitā
MSEVS	Materials for the Study of Early History of the

	Vaiṣṇavite Sect
Muṇḍ. Up.	Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad
Nārada.	Nāradasmṛti
NKGW	Nachrichten Von der Königl. Gesellshaft der Wissenschaften
ODV	Origin and Development of Vaṣnavism
OST	Original Sanskrit Texts
OHI	Oxford History of India
OGCI	Origin and Growth of Caste in India
PTS	Pali Text Society
Parāśara.	Pārāśarasmṛti
Pāras. Gṛ. Sūtra	Pāraskara Gṛhya Sūtra
PBr.	Pañchaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa
PHAI	Political History of Ancient India
PO	Poona Orientalist
PMC	Catalogue of Coins in the Punjab Museum
Pr. Up.	Praśna Upaniṣad
Pratijñā	Pratijñāyaugandharāyaṇa
QJMS	Quarterly Journal of Mythic Society
QJAHS	Quarterly Journal of Andhra Historical Society
Raghu.	Raghuvaṃśa
Rājat.	Rājataraṅgiṇī
Rāmāy.	Rāmāyaṇa
RPVU	Religion and Philosophy of Vedas and Upaniṣads
ṚV	Ṛgveda
Ṣaḍ. Br.	Ṣaḍviṃśa Brāhmaṇa
Sad. Puṇḍ.	Saddharma Puṇḍarīka
Sam. Nik.	Saṃyukta Nikāya
Sand Sut. or Śāṇḍ. Sūt.	Śāṇḍilya Sūtra
Śāṅkh. Gṛ. Sūtra	Śāṅkhāyana Gṛhya Sūtra
ŚAr.	Śāṅkhāyana Āraṇyaka
SBE	Sacred Books of the East
ŚBr.	Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa
SI	Select Inscriptions
SIHC	Studies in Indian History and Civilization
ŚNS	Śukranītisāra
SOB	Studies in the Origins of Buddhism
SONEIBT	The Social Orginisation in North-East India in Buddha's Time
ŚŚSūt.	Śāṅkhāyana Śrauta Sūtra
Sum. Vilās.	Sumaṅgala Vilāsini
Sut. Nip.	Sutta Nipāta
Svap.	Svapnavāsavadattam
Śvet. Up.	Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad

TĀr.	Taittirīya Āraṇyaka
TBr.	Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa
TMBr.	Tāṇḍya Mahābrāhmaṇa
Tr.	Translation and Translated by
TSaṃ.	Taittirīya Saṃhitā
Vaikh. Dh. Pr.	Vaikhānasa Dharma Praśna
Varāha P.	Varāha Purāṇa
Vāyu P.	Vāyu Purāṇa
VDS	Vasiṣṭha Dharma Sūtra
Ved. Age.	Vedic Age
Ved. Ind.	Vedic Index of Names and Subjects
Vin.	Vinaya Texts
Vin. P.	Vinaya Piṭaka
Viṣ. P.	Viṣṇu Purāṇa
Viṣ. Sm.	Viṣṇu Smṛti
VSaṃ.	Vājasaneyi Saṃhitā
Yāj.	Yājñavalkyasmṛti
YV	Yajurveda
ZDMG	Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft.

SCHEME OF TRANSLITERATION OF NAGARI LETTERS INTO ROMAN EQUIVALENTS

अ	a	ए	e
आ	ā	ऐ	ai
इ	i	ओ	o
ई	ī	औ	au
उ	u	ऋ	ṛ
ऊ	ū		

(ं) ṃ Anusvāra (:) ḥ Visarga

क्	k	ट्	ṭ	प्	p
ख्	kh	ठ्	ṭh	फ्	ph
ग्	g	ड्	ḍ	ब्	b
घ्	gh	ढ्	ḍh	भ्	bh
ङ्	ṅ	ण्	ṇ	म्	m
च्	c	त्	t	य्	y
छ्	ch	थ्	th	र्	r
ज्	j	द्	d	ल्	l
झ्	jh	ध्	dh	व्	v or w
ञ्	ñ	न्	n	श्	ś
ष्	ṣ	स्	s	ह्	h

Current proper names of places and persons have not been given any diacritical mark.

PREFACE

The present work aims at tracing the cultural role of the Brāhmaṇa class from *circa* 200 BC to *circa* AD 500. In the study of cultural history the role concept serves as a useful tool and enables us to investigate the niceties of cultural changes from closer angles. It provides insight into the reactions, attitudes, and disposition of the role-performers to the contemporary forces which, naturally, lie behind role-actions. It also seeks to mark the relative influence exerted by the role-performers on the course of cultural transformations.

Since the Brāhmaṇas were generally held as inseparably connected with the traditional culture, a study of their role naturally attracted our attention. As far as the period of our study is concerned, it had the background of different cultural traditions characterised by the most ambitious tendencies to overwhelm one another.

The cultural activities of the Brāhmaṇas in this period were quite varied and extensive. We have underlined and analysed only such of them as were of primary importance in the dominant cultural characteristics of the age. We accept this time-span as a distinct period in the cultural history of ancient India and consequently, our treatment of the subject was bound to be topical rather than chronological.

In our study 'role' is taken to signify the social actions of the Brāhmaṇas in response to the challenges of this age which are best expressed in the provisions of law made in relation to other Varṇas and the non-Varṇa people. These actions were primarily motivated by 'structurally given demands, i.e., norms, expectations, taboos, responsibilities, etc. associated with their given social position.'[1] In this sense role signifies 'something outside the given individual, a set of pressures and focilitations that channel, guide, impede, support his functioning in the organisation,'[2] and it includes "the attitude, value and behaviour ascribed by the society to any and all persons occupying this status."[3] Thus, the role of the

[1]Livinson, "Role, Personality and Social Structure," vide *Sociological Theory*, ed. L.A. Coser and B. Rosenberg, 1964, p. 284.

[2]ibid, p. 248.

[3]Linton, vide *Sociological Theory*, ed. Coser and Rosenberg, p. 285.

Brāhmaṇas in our period was not so much important in its mere occupational aspect. As the custodians of the traditional culture they played a part of far greater importance. The antagonistic forces of the age not only disturbed the vocational security of the classes but endangered the very orthodox culture.

In tracing the background of the Brāhmaṇic activities and the part played by them in our period, which went to influence the heterodox sects, we have confined ourselves mainly to the mutual relations between the orthodox faith and Buddhism. Equal emphasis has not been placed on Jainism not only because the Jaina literature in its present form belongs to a period later than that of ours but also on account of the fact that the cultural importance of Jainism in our period was greatly overshadowed by Buddhism. The latter created a far greater dent into the Vedic orthodoxy and also exerted a greater degree of influence on the foreigners than Jainism.

As regards the sources, our work is based mainly on the literary and epigraphic evidence, although we have also utilised the archaeological and numismatic material. The most trying problem in handling the literary sources, however, has been, as usual, the lack of their chronology. The works which have undergone redactions and additions in successive periods can only be ascribed to a range of several centuries. Of the Epics, the *Rāmāyaṇa* retains its purer form and it is said that its last additions were not made later than the 2nd century AD.[1] The *Mahābhārata*, replete with materials on socio-religious institutions, is utilised by us to the maximum possible extent. Most of the scholars (Macdonell, *HSL*, p. 286; Winternitz, *HIL*, I, pp. 465, 316, 366; Keith, *HSL*, p. 45) consider that the great epic assumed its present form between 400 BC and AD 400. Intense researches of Sukthankar (*ABORI*, XVIII, pp. 1-76) in preparing its critical edition show that its approximate nucleus belongs to a period between 2nd century BC and 2nd century AD[2] and that vast additions were made by the Brāhmaṇas of Bhṛgu family.[3] We have also utilised the Dharmasūtras—those of Gautama, Baudhāyana, Āpastamba, and Vasiṣṭha—which fall (Mm. P.V. Kane, *HDŚ*, II, Pt. I, p. XI; Keith, *HSL*, pp. 437ff) between the 6th century BC and 3rd century BC[4], for tracing and supporting the Varṇāśrama tradition in comparison with the works of our age. The most important work of our period is the *Manusmṛti*. This work has the older laws of Manu as its basis. The nature and extent of its authority can easily be imagined when we find it severely attacked by Aśvaghoṣa in his *Vajrasūcī* and also by the fact that a number of verses of this Smṛti are integrated in the Great Epic. The most accepted (Keith, *HSL*, p. 441; Bühler, *SBE*, XXV, Introduction, pp. CXIV-CXVIII) time-

[1]Keith, *HSL*, p. 42; Winternitz, *HIL*, I, p. 503.
[2]cf. Hopkins, *The Great Epic of India*, pp. 397-98; *CHI*, I, p. 258.
[3]vide D.D. Kosambi, *ISIH*, p. 110.
[4]R.S. Sharma. *Śūdras in Ancient India*, p. 83 and fns. 1, 5, 10, p. 84.

range of this work is 200 BC to AD 200. The *Yājñavalkyasmṛti* is also of quite considerable importance. It belongs to a period later than that of Manu and can roughly be assigned (Kane, op. cit., p. XI; Keith, op. cit., p. 446) to a time between AD 100-300. The date of the *Viṣṇusmṛti* (*Vaiṣṇava Dharma Sūtra*) is said (Kane, op. cit., p. XI) to be between AD 100 and 300, though Keith (op. cit., p. 438) is of opinion that it cannot belong to a period before the 3rd century AD, Mm. P.V. Kane (ibid) has put the date of the *Nāradasmṛti* between AD 100 and 400 and that of the *Bṛhaspatismṛti* (cf. Keith, *HSL*, p. 446) between AD 300 and 500. We have used these works along with relevant commentaries on them.

The Purāṇas also furnish us with plenty of material. Of the major Purāṇas, the *Mārkaṇḍeya* (2nd century AD 400, vide Hazra, *Puranic Record on Hindu Rites and Customs*, pp. 10-12), *Vāyu* (*c.* 3rd and 4th centuries AD, Hazra, op. cit., p.16), *Brahmāṇḍa* (Hazra, op. cit., pp. 17-18), *Viṣṇu* (4th century AD, Hazra, op. cit., pp. 19-23; Pargiter, *AIHT*, p. 80; Winternitz, op. cit., I, p. 545) contain material on Hindu rites and customs reflecting the socio-religious tendency of our age.[1] The *Matsya* (Hazra, op. cit., pp. 32-38) and the *Kūrma* (Hazra, op. cit., pp. 65-75) Purāṇas also belong to our period, though they are said to have undergone additions up to quite later times. Scholars differ in fixing the date of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*[2] which according to R.C. Hazra (op. cit., pp. 55-57) should be taken to have been composed in the first half of the sixth century AD. The *Harivaṃśa Purāṇa* is said (Hazra, op. cit., p. 55) to be of *c.* 4th century AD. Besides, the *Mahābhāṣya* of Patañjali, the works of Bhāsa (*c.* 3rd century AD, vide Keith, *Sanskrit Drama*, pp. 95f.), the *Kāmasūtra* of Vātsyāyana (*c.* 3rd century AD),[3] Bharata's *Nāṭyaśāstra* (*c.* 3rd century AD vide *AIU*, p. 270) and the works of Kālidāsa (belonging to the Gupta period, Keith, *HSL*, p. 80) have supplied us valuable material.

As regards the Buddhist sources, besides the Pāli canonical works utilised for information on earlier times, we have mainly used the Buddhist Sanskrit literature for our study. Most of them, like the *Avadāna-Śataka*, *Divyāvadāna*, *Mahāvastu*, *Lalitavistara*, *Saddharma-Puṇḍarīka* (Winternitz, op. cit., II, pp. 297-304 and the works of Aśvaghosa together with the Pāli text *Milindapañho* (Winternitz, op. cit., p. 18) belong to our period. The Jātakas are also of considerable importance to our period. Their Gātha portion preserves the ancient Buddhist traditions while some of their prose sections depict the social condition of the 3rd century BC. But most of them represent the society of the post-Mauryan times and even of early centuries of the Christian era. We have also utilised certain

[1]Pusalker, *Studies in Epics and Purāṇas*, Bombay, 1955, pp. liiiff.

[2]Bhandarkar, *Vaiṣṇavism, Śaivism, etc.*, p. 49; Pargiter, *AIHT*, p. 80; Winternitz, op. cit., I, p. 556.

[3]Chakladhar, *Social Life in Ancient India*, pp. 33-37.

Jaina works such as *Āchāraṅga Sūtra, Sūtrakṛtāñga, Uttarādhyayana, Sūtra* the *Kalpa-Sūtras*, etc.

This work represents substantially my thesis on the Role of the Brāhmaṇas from 200 BC to *circa* AD 350 approved for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (in history in 1967) of the Banaras Hindu University. Many a problem stood in the way of early publication of this work. The revision itself took more than a couple of years mainly owing to my heavy teaching load both in New Delhi and Beirut.

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G.P. Upadhyay

Vindhyashri
R-5, Vani Vihar,
Uttam Nagar,
New Delhi-110059

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Chapter 1

THE CULTURAL TRADITIONS OF THE LATER VEDIC PERIOD (EVOLUTION OF CULTURAL TRADITIONS FROM THE LATER VEDIC PERIOD UP TO *circa* THIRD CENTURY BC)

1. The Geography of the Vedic Culture

The Ideal Country of the Vedic Culture

In the later Vedic period the centre of the gravity of Āryan culture shifted from the bank of the river Sarasvatī to the tract of land lying between the Yamunā and the Gaṅgā. The same Vedic culture is elaborated in the Brāhmaṇa literature which flourished originally in the Indus basin but the land of its later evolution is not the same. We are introduced to a region known as the middle land inhabited by the Kurus, the Pañcālas together with the Vaśas and the Uśīnaras.[1] The passages,[2] giving the ethnological information, describe this land as firm middle quarter which was surrounded in the south by the Satvatas,[3] in the north by the Uttara-Kurus and the Uttara-Madras, in the east by Eastern people (i.e. the peoples of Kāśī, Kośala, Videha and Magadha), and in the west by the Apācyas.[4]

This geographical region remains the ideal land of the Vedic culture for several centuries to come. Baudhāyana[5] mentions that the country of the Āryans (Āryāvarta) lies to the east of the region where Sarasvatī disappears, to the west of the Black forest, to the north of the Pāriyātra (mountains), and to the south of the Himālaya. The rule of conduct prevailing there was authoritative. The other view held the country between the Yamunā and the Gaṅgā to be Āryāvarta.[6] Baudhāyana mentions this sacred land of the Āryans surrounded by the peoples of Avanti, Aṅga,

[1] *ABr.*, VIII.14.

[2] ibid.

[3] For the racial mixing among the Sātvatas, Bhojas, Yādavas, and Śūrasenas see Lassen, *Indische Alterthumskunde*, I, p. 757; Weber, *Indische Studien*, I, p. 211.

[4] See Oldenberg, *Buddha*, pp. 392-3; De La Mazelière, *De La Civilization Indienne*, 1903, pp. 22-23; Basham, *HDĀ*, p. 4; Keith, *HOS*, 25, pp. 330-31.

[5] *BDS*, I.1.2.10.

[6] ibid, I.1.2.11; *VDS*, I.12.

Magadha, Surāṣṭra, Dekhan, Upāvṛt, Sindhu and Sauvīrās who are contemptuously described to have been of mixed origin (Saṃkīrṇa Yonayaḥ).[1] If any person happens to enter such an unholy land, he is obliged to perform the rite of purification because it is a sinful deed.[2]

The people of this ideal land whose territory forms roughly the western part of modern Uttar Pradesh with neighbouring districts of Haryana are deemed as qualified champions of Āryan culture. To the farther East of this region lies the country of the people who were looked down upon by the orthodox people of this middle country. The Brāhmaṇical literature held the people of the eastern region as non-Vedic and fallen. From the *Atharvaveda*[3] we know that the Vrātyas who were found in the eastern region had their own culture distinct from that of the Vedic orthodoxy and their contact came to be despised later on.[4] It was in this middle country, distinct from the outlying lands, especially the eastern regions, where the later Vedic culture flourished.

2. The Social Characteristics of the Vedic Tradition

The Development of the Class System

The foundation of the Hindu social system based on the classes has to be traced from the celebrated but most probably interpolated[5] hymn[6] of the *Puruṣa Sūkta* of the *Ṛgveda*, which seeks to divide society into four major classes, i.e., Brāhmaṇa, Rājanya, Vaiśya and Śūdra. The earlier portions[7] of the same scripture, although without naming the classes, refer to the four divisions of the people on the basis of their respective vocations. The hymn of the *Puruṣa Sūkta* just mentioned testifies to the steady formation of the four classes with increasingly rigid characteristics. It also contains the theorizing motive which exercised a wonderful influence on the later Hindu scriptures and the law books.

The Term Brahman

The term Brahman, which developed into Brāhmaṇa, signified the sacerdotal class. It was typified by the sixfold duty in the later law-books, though marked by varying shades of connotations in the early Vedic literature.

The word Brahman, according to the renowned lexicographers Böhtlingk and Roth, is derived from the root 'bṛh' (Barh) and is taken to signify 'the godward striving devotion, which appears as an exuberance of spirit

[1] *BDS*, I.1.2.13.
[2] ibid, I.1.2.13-14; see also *SBE*, XIV, p. 148.
[3] *AV*, XV.2.1.
[4] *PBr*, XVII.1.1-2; *BDS*, I.8.16.16; I.9.17.15. See also *Ved. Ind.*, II, pp. 342-44; B.P. Sinha, *Decline of the Kingdom of Magadha* (Introduction), pp. XVIIf.
[5] Muir, *OST*, I, 239f. and 258.
[6] *ṚV*, X.90.12; *AV*, XIX.6.6.
[7] *ṚV*, I.113.6.

and particularly the pious expression of it in the service of the divine.'[1] Geldner takes it to signify the mysterious power inspiring the poet and the seers.[2] To Haug[3] it signifies 'growth' or the means of securing growth, i.e., worship and prayer. He connects the word 'brahma' with 'baresma' of the *Zend-Avesta*. Other scholars like Osthoff,[4] Oldenberg,[5] and Hillebrandt[6] have found a relation between Brahman and 'Bricht' and take the word to signify magic. While Winternitz found that in the Veda this word means mere formula and the verses having sacred magical power,[7] Haug believes that in the *Ṛgveda* the term 'Kṛtabrahman' signifies' a mysterious power which can be called forth by various ceremonies.'[8] But it seems that the significance of the magical power found in the word is much more predominant in the *Atharvaveda* than in the *Ṛgveda* wherein the word very often signifies 'a simple prayer.'[9]

The connotation of magical power in the word 'Brahman' seems to have developed on account of magical acts.[10] The priest who is the performer of such acts has mastery over efficacious words and his speech is said to be sharpened by the power of Brahman.[11] By the means of invisible potency of Brahman the priest can cure diseases.[12] Even in the later period the Atharvan priest was known to have possessed of such miraculous powers, so much so that Kauṭilya[13] recommends his services to the king because the priest could eradicate calamities both divine and human by the device laid down in the Atharvan rites. Manu held the Atharvan text as the greatest power of the priest.[14]

Philosophical Connotation

Apart from the ritualistic and magical interpretations, the conception of

[1]Böhtlingk and Roth, *St. Sanskrit Worterbech*; *ERE*, II, pp. 797f; cf. Deussen, *System of Vedānta*, 1912, pp. 49f.

[2]Geldner, *Vedische Studien*, 2.145ff.

[3]*Aitareya Brāhmaṇa of the Ṛgveda*, I, Introduction, p. 4.

[4]vide Winternitz, *HIL*, I, p. 247.

[5]ibid, Oldenberg, *Die Religion des Veda*, p. 65, n. 1. Once Oldenberg held the view that in the *Ṛgveda* it means hymns and holy words. Oldenberg, *Zur Religion und Mythologie des Veda*, Nach, Gött. 1915, pp. 195ff.; Zur Geschichte des worts Brahman, *NGGW*, 1916, p. 717; cf. Griswold, *Brahman: A Study in the History of Indian Philosophy*, New York, 1900.

[6]*ERE*, II, p. 797.

[7]Winternitz, op. cit., p. 247; L. Renou, "Sur La Notion De Brahman," *Journal Asiatique*, CCXXXVII, 1949, pp. 21ff.

[8]*ERE*, II, p. 797.

[9]Belvalkar, and Ranade, *History of Indian Philosophy*, II, pp. 10-14; Brahman, Baresman—Bricht—Bhraj, *Fourth Oriental Conference Proceedings*, II, p. 8.

[10]*AV*, XIX.9.3; see also XIX.9.4-5; see also VI. 108.2; see also I.11.1.

[11]ibid, XIX.9.3-5.

[12]ibid, I.10.1-4; see also I.14.4.

[13]*Karth*, I.9.15.

[14]*Manu*, XI.33.

the term Brahman underwent[1] a great change corresponding to the change in the cultural life of the Vedic people. The philosophical significance of the term seems closely connected with the symbolical interpretations of sacrifices and their articles.[2] When the sacrifice was interpreted as universal principle[3] the 'brahma' became its essence.[4] There developed the theory[5] of an all-pervading God, the supreme cosmic energy; and this absolute Brahma could be appropriated by mental sacrifice, meditation, and penance. Thus the term in its neuter form also came to denote[6] the Supreme Spirit, the Absolute. This connotation gave a new dimension to the term and rendered it beyond the limitations of sacerdotalism and magical power. A passage in the *Taittirīya Saṃhitā* points out this change, saying that the hymns of the texts are limited but the Brahma is without limitations.[7] This etymological change brought about a corresponding evolution in the attributes of a Brāhmaṇa by the Upaniṣadic times. He is no more only a singer of hymns or a priest discharging ritualistic functions. According to the Upaniṣadic standards, a Brāhmaṇa was taken to be a person who has the knowledge of Brahma or the doctrine of the Supreme Soul.[8] In fact, a number of Brāhmaṇas appear in the Vaṃśa list who were proficient in such doctrines and they were described as Brahmavādins.[9] The knowledge of the Absolute and the realization of the same by self-abnegation and ethical life, accepted as the essential qualities of a Brāhmaṇa, must have been advantageous to him, because thereby a Brāhmaṇa could retain the membership of his class by birth even when he was not following the priestly profession.

Brāhmaṇas and the Vedic Functionaries

In Vedic literature the Brāhmaṇa appears in different capacities performing varied functions of Vipra, ṛṣi, poet, priest, etc. In the socio-religious life of the Vedic people his sphere of activities and obligations took a comprehensive character.

Brāhmaṇa as Vipra: The Vipra appears as an inspired singer in Vedic literature[10] but later the term signifies a 'learned Brāhmaṇa' and 'in the epics it comes to mean no more than a Brāhmaṇa.'[11] The word is used as a synonym for a learned Brāhmaṇa in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*.[12]

[1] Mishra, Padma, Priest and Seers in the Vedas with especial Reference to the Evolution of Brāhmaṇa Class, Ph.D. Thesis 1965, London University, p. 251.

[2] *AV*, XIX.42.1.

[3] *Ch. Up.*, IV.26.1; IV.16.3; IV.17.3-4; cf. *ŚBr.*, V.1.2.11-12; V.1.5.2; VI.1.1.1ff; VI.2.1.1.f.

[4] *AV*, XIX.42.2.

[5] Keith, *RPVU*, II, pp. 445-46.

[6] *EBr.*, III, under Brahman; V. Fausböll, *Indian Mythology*, London, 1902, pp. 57ff.

[7] *TSaṃ.*, VII.3.1.4.

[8] *Bṛ. Up.*, III.5.1.ff.

[9] *Ved. Ind.*, II, p. 79; *Bṛ. Up.*, II.6.1-3; *Pr. Up.*, 1-4; *Bṛ. Up.*, III.7.4.

[10] *ṚV*, I.129.2 and 11; 162.7; IV.26.1; *TSaṃ.*, II. 5.9.1; *VŚaṃ.*. 9.4; *ŚBr.*, I.4.2.7.

[11] *Ved. Ind.*, II, p. 302.

[12] *ŚBr.*, III.5.3.12.

Brāhmaṇa as Ṛṣi: The ṛṣis were the seers who composed fresh hymns in their divinely charged moods.[1] In the later Vedic literature they are depicted and cited as poets 'par excellence' who composed the Vedic hymns.[2] It is to be noted that the word Brāhmaṇa appears also to signify a thinker and poet.[3] As 'Brahman' in neuter form connotes also hymn,[4] prayer[5] and magic,[6] its masculine form Brahmā by implication 'denotes the person who composes or repeats a hymn or prayer.'[7] Geldner opines that 'it is not till the time of the Brāhmaṇas that the composition of hymns appears to have fallen into disuse.'[8] But long before the time of the Dharmasūtras new additions to the Vedic hymns had ceased.[9] However, in *Ṛgveda* itself we find the Brāhmaṇas being regarded as ṛṣis. The case of Vasiṣṭha is an obvious one for he appears at once as Purohita[10] of Sudās and as a Brāhmaṇa in the sacrifice of Śunaḥśepa.[11] But he along with six other ṛṣis forms the list of the traditional seven ṛṣis. The rest also, i.e., Gotama, Bharadvāja, Viśvāmitra, Jamadagni, Kaśyapa and Atri[12] who were described as Brāhmaṇa and Purohita, were known at the same time as ṛṣis. The kings who composed hymns were also regarded as Rājarṣis or Rājanyarṣis,[13] i.e., ṛṣis. But the formation of the Gotra lineage of the Brāhmaṇas after the Vedic ṛṣis establishes the fact securely that the later Brāhmaṇas became the representatives of the ṛṣis of by-gone days. In course of time 'the ṛṣis became the representative of a sacred past and were regarded as holy sages whose deeds are narrated as if they were the deeds of gods or Asuras.'[14] They were the most exalted of the Vipras and Brāhmaṇas.[15] Their skill was regarded as heaven-sent.[16] The Brāhmaṇas descended from them represent all the deities.[17] The inheritance of the ṛṣi tradition seems to be also one of the factors which made the Brāhmaṇas the intellectual leaders of society.

Brāhmaṇa as Priest: The authors of the *Vedic Index* hold the view that the Brahman in neuter gender denotes the priestly class as opposed to the

[1]*ṚV*, I.1.2; see also I.45.3; III.62.7; I.109.2; II.18.3; VI.50.6; VII.14.4; VIII.43.13.
[2]*ŚBr.*, I.7.44; II.5.1.4; *ABr.* II.25; VIII.26.
[3]*ṚV*, I.80.1; I.164.34; X.107.6.
[4]Oldenberg ; *Zur Religion und Mythologie des Veda, Nach*, Gött. 1915, pp. 195ff.
[5]Muir, *OST*, I, pp. 242-43.
[6]Oldenberg, *Die Religion des Veda*, p. 65. n.1.
[7]Muir, op. cit., I, p. 242; See also Fausböll, *Indian Mythology*, p. 69.
[8]Geldner, *Vedische Studien*, 2, 151.
[9]*ĀDS*, I.2.5.4.
[10]*ŚŚSūt.*, XVI.11.14; cf. *ṚV*, X.150.5.
[11]*ABr.*, VII. 16; cf. *ṚV*, VII.33.11.
[12]*Bṛ. Up.*, II.2.6; cf. *ṚV*, IV.42.8; X.109.4; 130.7; *AV*, XI.1.24; XII.1.39.
[13]*PBr.*, XII.12.6. See also J.T. Wheeler, *Ancient and Hindu India, The Brahmanic Period*, pp. 22-23.
[14]*ABr.* I.16-17; II.19; *ŚBr.*, I.6.2.7; vide *Ved. Ind.*, I, pp. 116-17.
[15]*ṚV*, IX.96.6.
[16]*ṚV*, I.37.4; See also VII.36.1 and 9 and VIII.32.27.
[17]*ŚBr.*, XII. 4.4.6.

warrior class and the people, i.e., Kṣatra and Viś.[1] The passages to this effect are found in the *Ṛgveda*,[2] the *Atharvaveda*,[3] and the Saṃhitās.[4] The word denotes a special class of priest distinguished from other functionaries at sacrifices like hotṛ, potṛ, ṛtvija, neṣṭṛ, agnidh, praśāstṛ, and adhvaryu.[5] Almost all the verbs associated with the word Brahman unmistakably indicate different priestly activities.[6] The Brāhmaṇas were intimately connected with priestly functions. Geldner[7] opines that the Purohita from the beginning acted as the Brāhmaṇa priest in the sacrificial ritual and used to be the general superintendent of the sacrifice. But Oldenberg[8] holds the view that the Purohita has been hotṛ priest, the singer, 'par excellence.' He connects the functions of the Purohita with magical aspects and says that when priestly activity ceased to centre in the song, the Purohita, with his skill in magic, became Brāhmaṇa, who also regarded the magic powerful enough to undo the errors of the sacrifices.[9] We find that it was the Brāhmaṇa priest who came to establish his connections with royalty and became the royal chaplain.[10]

Thus we find that the Brāhmaṇa, though a special class of priest, appears in different capacities and is equated with ṛṣi, sage, poet, singer, and the leader of worship. He is presented as the genius who excells in divine knowledge and virtue.[11] He is made exceedingly mighty by divine favour and receives the special gift of godly inspiration. His utterances are welcomed by the gods and men alike.[12] What emerges out of these functions of the Brāhmaṇas are the different sets of roles they played in the socio-religious activities in the Vedic and later Vedic period. But as the Vedic culture was dominated by the ritualistic cult of fire worship, the Brāhmaṇas monopolised the priestly functions.

The Conflict between Spiritual and Temporal Powers

The position of the priestly class seems to have been ambiguous and at times precarious in relation to the 'rājanya' class, the rulers or nobility, as the latter threatened the position of the former. The inner current of tussle between the spiritual and the temporal power for the priestly office and the social precedence had been an important feature of Vedic society for a long time. The tradition of this conflict is preserved in the later literature also.[13] The instances of atrocities committed on the Brāhmaṇas by

[1] *Ved. Ind.*, II, p. 77
[2] *ṚV*, I.10.1; I.80.1; I.33.9; II.39.1; IV.50.8-9; V.29.3; VII.7.5.; VIII.7.20.
[3] *AV*, II.15.4; IV.7.9; VII.5.8; XV.10.3-4.
[4] *TSaṃ.*, III.3.1; *VSaṃ.*, VI.3; VII.21.
[5] *ṚV*, II.1.2; X.91.10; X.52.2.
[6] *ERE.*, II, p. 797.
[7] vide *Ved. Ind.*, II, p. 77.
[8] Oldenberg, *Religion des Veda*, pp. 380-81.
[9] *ABr.*, VII.26.
[10] *ABr.*, VII.26.
[11] *ṚV*, X.107.6.
[12] *ṚV*, X.125.6.
[13] *Mbh.*, XII. chs. 48-49.

the kings like Purūravas,[1] Nahuṣa,[2] and Nimi[3] gives an idea of the situation in which Brāhmaṇas exerted themselves fully to safeguard their interest and establish their superiority. The celebrated contest for the priestly office between Vasiṣṭha and Viśvāmitra also gives evidence to the same effect.[4] In a number of passages they are seen as protesting against the harsh treatment of the nobility and threatening the nobles to restore back to themselves their wives and the cows robbed from them.[5] They claimed special rights for their women and cows.[6] Thus the Brāhmaṇas tried to secure protection, immunities, and civil rights.

Social Stratification

When we come to the period of the later Saṃhitās and the Brāhmaṇas, the society seems to have gone a long way of its development. The varṇa system appears to be grounded on the firm root of socio-religious stratification. The varṇa theory attains a theological colour for even the divine beings are divided according to the existing social set up.[7]

The scriptures devise the stratification of the classes in regard to the manners, customs, and ceremonies also. The Brāhmaṇa literature prescribes different addresses in descending order of politeness and different expressions of speech,[8] metres, and verses of hymns[9] differentiating relatively the socio-religious positions of the classes. Further, different sizes of funeral mounds,[10] seasons for sacrifices,[11] and different deities[12] were meant for the members of the four varṇas. Whatever factors might have been responsible for such development, from the sociological point of view these devices appear to be the techniques to promote social differentiation which sought to maintain the hierarchical superiority of the upper classes. The priestly imagination must have been instrumental in bringing about these measures.

Prerogatives of the Brāhmaṇas

The true image of a Brāhmaṇa, according to the Vedic tradition, comprises purity of parentage, befitting conduct, glory, and 'perfecting of people.'[13]

[1]vide Muir, op. cit., I, pp. 306-7.
[2]ibid, pp. 307-15.
[3]Manu, VII.14, 38-42; *Bhāg. P.*, IX.13.1-13; Muir, op. cit., pp. 316-17.
[4]*ṚV*, VII.33.1; *ṢḍBr.*, I.5; vide Muir, op. cit., pp. 317ff.; Manu, VIII.110.
[5]*ṚV*, X.109.1ff; *AV*, V.17-18; XII.5.
[6]*AV*, V.17.9; III.28.2.
[7]It is said that Agni, Bṛhaspati etc. were regarded as Brāhmaṇas, Indra, Varuṇa and Soma the Kṣatriyas, Rudra, Āditya and Viśvedevas the Vaiśyas and Pūṣan etc. Śūdras, cf. *KBr.*, IX.5; *ŚBr.*, V.3.2.4; XIII. 5.4.25; *TSaṃ.*, III.5.5; *TBr*, 2.2.9; *MSaṃ.*, 1.10.13; cf. *Mbh.*, XII.201.22-25.
[8]*ŚBr.*, I.1.4.12.
[9]*ABr.*, I.5.
[10]*ŚBr.*, XIII.8.3.11.
[11]*TBr.*, I.1.2.7; *ŚBr.*, II.1.3.4.
[12]*VSaṃ.*, XXX.5.5; *TBr.*, III.4.1.1; *ŚBr.*, XIII.6.2.10.
[13]i.e., Brāhmaṇya, Pratirūpacaryā, Yaśa, and Lokapakti. *ŚBr.*, XI.5.7.1; *SBE*, XLIV p. 99.

They have been granted the privileges of honour, gifts, security against oppression and freedom from being beaten.[1] The Brāhmaṇas seem to have laid claims to be independent of others[2] and outside of the royal clutches. The Soma, not the human ruler, was their king.[3] They claimed superiority over other classes.[4] They asserted a special legal position before law. It was beyond the king's power to censure them.[5] In case 'a Brāhmaṇa and a non-Brāhmaṇa have a litigation, one (the king) should support the Brāhmaṇa. . . if he opposes him he opposes himself.'[6] The murder of a Brāhmaṇa is taken to be really the most heinous offence and the expiation of this sin is the performance of a horse-sacrifice.[7] These claims, although pretending to show their privileges and superiority, in fact betray their precarious position before the political power.

Status of the Brāhmaṇa

The Vedic rituals, ceremonies, and sacrifices became enormously complicated in the course of time. The chain of sacraments from birth to death made the services of the priest indispensable for society. The intricate system of sacrifices and the esoteric science of ritualism required a highly expert hand to execute them. The role of the priest became vital for the state on account of the growing need of the performance of sacrifice and witchcraft, which had become an important instrument for the defence of the king and the people. It is stated that if a king wants to defeat the army of an enemy, he must go to a Brāhmaṇa who, by consecrating the war-chariot with all sorts of incantations, helps the king in securing victory.[8] In such ceremonies the importance of the Brāhmaṇa priest was great as he was the heart of the sacrifice.[9] According to a passage of the *Ṛgveda*, the people themselves pay respect to those kings of whom the Brāhmaṇa goes before.[10] In the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*,[11] while bringing out symbolically the mutual relationship between the spiritual power (Mitra, i.e., the conceiver or intellect) and the temporal power (Varuṇa, i.e., the doer or will), the importance of the spiritual power is asserted. But the ideal was the cooperation of both for mutual success.

These factors seem to have created a spiritual status of the Brāhmaṇa priest who could exert enormous influence on the state. The Purohita has the power of lustre (Samana) to 'multiply the people' by the favour of

[1]i.e., arcā, dāna, ajyeyatā and avadhyatā. *ŚBr.*, XI. 5.7.1.
[2]*ŚBr.*, XI.5.7.1.
[3]ibid, V.4.2.3.
[4]ibid, VI.4.4.13.
[5]ibid, V.4.2.3.
[6]*TSaṃ.*, II.5.2.
[7]*TSaṃ.*, VI.5.10.2; *Śbr.*, XIII.3.5.2; XIII.3.1.1; and XIII.5.4.1. f.
[8]*ABr.*, VIII.10.
[9]*ŚBr.*, XII.8.2.23.
[10]*ṚV*, IV.50.8.
[11]*ŚBr.*, IV.1.4.1-6.

Indra[1] and the king consecrated by him with the 'Mahābhiṣeka' of Indra establishes his sway round the earth on every side.[2] His spiritual status was pitched so high that he was able to punish in return (as Brāhmaṇas 'are not subjected to the Kṣatriya'—Caland) his supporters (i.e., Barons—the nobles.)[3] These high sounding claims indicate that the Brāhmaṇas tried to carve out a status for their class as if spiritually they were a state within the state. It was said that by means of their mystic knowledge of 'mantra' they could make the people strong and the nobility weak and vice versa.[4] Their political status seems to have gone up as they appear in the jewel-offering ceremony second only to the 'Senānī.'[5] The Purohita is described as 'half the self of the Kṣatriya'[6] and wakeful about the kingdom.[7] The Kṣatriya power was deprived of drinking Soma on account of Indra's sin of killing Vṛtra[8] and in this . . . . The Brāhmaṇa shows its high claim for its caste.'[9]

The above sketch of the Brāhmaṇas' position amply proves that during the later Vedic period they not only acquired unprecedented superiority in spiritual matters but shared an important position in state transactions also. They were entitled to become members of the political bodies like Sabhā.[10] It is rightly said[11] that though the Brāhmaṇa was sometimes in danger of losing the privilege of his position owing to the caprice or tyranny of his patron, the importance of the Purohita's office was stressed 'not only for the religious needs of the king, but also for the security and welfare of kingdom.'

Besides, we find that the cult of sacrifice developed as the magical power became also a convenient means for the Brāhmaṇas to claim divinity for themselves. They are said to be divinely protected[12] and are described as having superhuman status.[13] They are regarded as human gods directly seen[14] and entitled to presents (dakṣiṇā).[15] Later we find that the whole edifice of the socio-religious system produced in the ideal middle country, based on the hierarchical pretentions, became the object of attack of the heterodox teachers of the non-Vedic cultural region of the East.

[1] *PBr.*, XV.5.24; *TSaṃ.*, III.5.2; *KSaṃ.*, XXXVI.17; *PBr.*, XV.3.7; *JBr.*, III.244-47.
[2] *ABr.*, VIII.21-23.
[3] *PBr.*, XVIII.10.8. Tr. Caland, p. 498.
[4] *MSaṃ.*, III.3.10; *KSaṃ.*, XXI. 10.35-37.
[5] *ŚBr.*, V.3.1.1-2.
[6] *ABr.*, VII.26; *MSaṃ.*, II.1.4.
[7] *VSaṃ.*, IX.23-24; *TSaṃ.*, I.7.10.
[8] *ABr.*, VII.28.
[9] *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, vide *Harvard Oriental Series*, XXV, p. 313.n.
[10] *TSaṃ.*, VII.1.8.f.
[11] U.N. Ghoshal, *The Hindu Public Life*, I, p. 164.
[12] *AV*, VI.12.2; XII.4.10 and 53; XII.3.1-25.
[13] *AV*, VI.13.1; See also VI.44.2; XIX.62.1.
[14] *ŚBr.*, II.2.2.6; IV.3.4.4; *TSaṃ.*, I.7.31; *KSaṃ.*, VIII.13; *MSaṃ.*, I.4.6; II.5.9.6; *TSaṃ.*, I.7.3.1; *ŚBr.*, II.2.2.6.
[15] *ŚBr.*, II.2.10.6; XIII.7.1.13-15.

3. The Vedic Religious Tradition

The Cult of Sacrifice and Ritualism

The Brāhmaṇa literature elaborates the Vedic rituals and cult of sacrifice based on fire worship. The esoteric nature of 'mantra' was preserved and it could not be taught[1] to an undeserving person. How important 'mantra' was can be imagined from the fact that even a son could rightfully address[2] his father as 'boy' provided he was the author of 'mantra' because he is himself a father.[3] In the period of the Brāhmaṇa literature there 'arose a myth which represents sacrifice as the first act in cosmology.'[4] The sacrifice is like a ship sailing heavenwards.[5] The gods are dependent[6] on what is offered to them in the ceremonies. Sacrifice was efficacious in fetching material gains and well-being in the next world.[7] The giving of gifts was regarded[8] as the most essential part of sacrifice.

The main land of the sacrificial tradition had been the same ideal region which was the stronghold of orthodox Vedicism. In the sacred region of Kurukṣetra the gods used to perform sacrifices.[9] The sacred land of sacrifices came to be extended from Sarasvatī and Dṛṣadvatī to Yamunā and the Pañcāla region.[10] The Kuru-Pañcāla kings performed the Rājasūya sacrifice.[11] But in course of time the Vedic cult of sacrifice moved further to the East. This is evidenced by the performance of a great sacrifice by King Janaka of Videha who invited a large number of Kuru-Pañcāla Brāhmaṇas headed by Yājñavalkya.[12]

In fact, the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*[13] describes the advance of the Vedic people towards the East by burning the 'forest along the Himālayan foothills.'[14] We find that in spite of all the dogmatic aspects of the cult of sacrifice, it was a great driving force, which not only lent a ritual solemnity to the adventure of the Vedic people but was a symbolical representation of their expansionist zeal. The passage informs us that the priest and the king followed the sacred fire which went eastward burning the forest. The eastern region is said to have become very cultivable for the Brāhmaṇas have caused the Agni Vaiśvānara to taste it through sacrifices. Thus we

[1] *ABr.*, V.33.
[2] *TMBr.*, XIII.3.24.
[3] see Oldenberg, *Vorwissenschaftliche Wissenschaft, die Weltanschauung der Brāhmana texte*, Göttingen, 1919, pp. 110ff; cf. *JAOS*, 1929, IXL, p. 99.
[4] Barth, *Religions of India*, p. 37.
[5] *ŚBr.*, IV.2.5.10.
[6] *ŚBr.*, III.1.4.3; *ABr.*, II.1.
[7] Keith, *RPVU*, p. 461.
[8] *ŚBr*, III.4.2.1ff; III.2.25; *ABr.*, I.24.
[9] *ŚBr.*, XIV.1.1.2; IV.1.5.13.
[10] *PBr.*, XXV.10; *ŚŚSūt.*, XIII.29; *ŚBr.*, V.5.2.5.
[11] *ŚŚSūt.*, XV.16.11; *ŚBr.*, I.7.2.8; V.5.2.5.
[12] *ŚBr.*, XI.6.3.1-26; *CHI*, I, pp. 122, 127.
[13] *ŚBr.*, I.4.1.14-17.
[14] Kosambi, *ISIH*, p. 116.

find that the cult of sacrifice was an immensely creative force which kept together the kings and the priests in their vital roles in economic, social, religious, and political spheres of the Vedic culture.

The Philosophy of Action

The upshot of the whole sacrificial cult is the doctrine of action for the betterment of man in this life and the world beyond. The Vedic tradition of thought formulates a consistent philosophy of life. It went through several phases of development with varying emphasis on the means of securing the supreme goal of life. The Brāhmaṇa literature emphasizes the path of action (Karma-mārga), while the Upaniṣads are concerned mainly with the path of knowledge. The doctrine of 'Karma' is based on the belief of transmigration of soul, rebirth, and the ultimate liberation, merging the individual soul with 'Brahma.' Though the conceptions of transmigration and 'Karma' were properly co-ordinated in the Upaniṣads with the cover of the doctrine of moral requital, yet the ideation of the theory can be traced from the Brāhmaṇa texts. Sylvain Lévi opines that 'elles (less speculation sur le sacrifice) l'ont initié peut-être à l'idée transmigrations.'[1] According to him, again, the authors of the Brāhmaṇas laid the foundation of classical philosophy.[2] The formula 'Let him meditate upon the 'true Brahman,'[3] expresses well the spirit of the Brāhmaṇas and that of the Upaniṣads.[4]

The Vedic and the Brāhmaṇic culture is rooted in the doctrine that action is essential in realization of desired objects and godhood. The *Gītā* traces the tradition of this doctrine when it says: It is through action alone that Janaka and others attained perfection.[5] Sacrificing contains the idea of the efficacy of action (Kriyā or Karma). The same idea is expressed when it is said that persons desirous of going to the world of the gods had to go between two fires; the deserving man passes through safely and the evil-doer is burnt.[6] His good and bad actions are taken into account in deciding his future life. Rebirth depends on 'Karma.' The birth of man in whatsoever world is caused by his acts in a previous existence.[7] It presents a formula, which develops later in the well-knit doctrine of transmigration and 'Karma,' as we find it in the *Chāndogva Upaniṣad*—wherein it is said that 'those whose conduct has been pleasing will quickly attain a pleasing birth, the birth of a Brāhmaṇa, or a Kṣatriya, or a Vaiśya; but those, whose conduct has been abominable, will quickly attain an abominable birth,

[1]Lévi, Sylvain, *La Doctrine Du Sacrifice dans les Brāhmaṇas,* Paris, 1898, p. 11; cf. Oldenberg, *Die Lehre der Upanishaden und Anfänge des Buddhismus,* Göttingen, 1915, pp. 26-35.

[2]Lévi, op.cit., p. 10.

[3]*ŚBr.*, X. 6. 3. 1; also *SBE*, XLIII, Pt. IV, p. 400.

[4]Lévi, op. cit., p. 10.

[5]*Gītā*. III. 40.

[6]*ŚBr.*, I. 9. 3. 1-2.

[7]ibid, VI. 2.2.3-7.

the birth of a dog, or a hog, or an outcaste.'[1] There is no hope for a man of immortal life (on earth). But by establishing the holy fire, especially the immortal element of fire in his innermost soul, he gets the desired life.[2] By performing the sacrifice he obtains supreme bliss and becomes part of the gods in future life.[3]

The Non-ascetic Trend

This orthodox culture represents man as god-fearing, fully conscious of his limited span of life and its inherent sorrow but exerting for material and heavenly gains through sacrificial acts. We, certainly, find mention of the ascetic life of Yatis and Munis ever since the Vedic age but they are treated as an institution outside this world-affirming tradition. The magic and charms of the *Atharvaveda* to ward off the evil spirits and the enormous body of Brāhmaṇic rites promise power, happiness, cattle, health, love, long life, and a noble rebirth. This spirit is adverse to the non-Vedic tradition of the eastern regions, where the popular institution of life was asceticism. The Brāhmaṇic culture advances the theory of duty. It is said that man is born owing four debts, first to the gods, second to the ṛṣis, third to his ancestors, and the last to men. These four debts imply sacrificial undertakings to the gods, study of the Vedas to preserve the sacred treasure of the ṛṣis, the maintenance of unbroken lineage of the forefathers by producing offspring, and hospitality to men by offering them food.[4] By him all is obtained, all is conquered, 'who discharges these duties.'[5]

4. The Challenges of the Non-Vedic Culture of the Eastern Tract

Reviewing the cultural history of Northern India our attention is naturally drawn towards the developments in the eastern tracts of the land. This region, especially Magadha, had been an object of strong antipathy of the orthodox Vedic people. In the *Atharvaveda* the people like the Gandhāris and the Mūjavants together with the Aṅgas and the Māgadhas or the Kāśīs and Mayas are despised by ascribing fever to them.[6] Māgadha appears in the list of the victims in the Puruṣamedha sacrifice[7] and in the *Atharvaveda* he is connected with the Vrātya culture.[8]

[1] *Ch. Up.*, V.10.7.
[2] *ŚBr.*, II.2.2.13-15; X.4.3.10; cf. S. Lévi, op. cit., pp. 95-96.
[3] *ŚBr.*, I.9.3.1-4.
[4] *ŚBr*, I.7.2.1; *TSaṃ.*, VI.3.105.
[5] *ŚBr*, I.7.2.5; *SBE*, XII, p. 191.
[6] *AV*, V.22.14. It may be noted that the Paippalāda recension mentions Kāśīs and Mayas instead of the Aṅgas and the Māgadhas cf. *PBr.*, XVII.1.1.ff; *JRAS*, 1913, p. 159; *LŚSūt.*, VIII.6.28.
[7] *VSaṃ.*, XXX.5.22; *TBr.*, III. 4.1.1.
[8] *AV*, XV.2.1-4; cf. B. C. Law, *Magadha in Ancient India*, London, 1946, p. 1ff.

The Cultural Tension

A great deal of tension is marked between the Vedic culture of the North-west and the heterodox non-Vedic culture of the North-east, especially that of the Magadhan region from the later Vedic period onwards. As to what was the factor contributing to this tension scholars agree with Oldenberg's opinion who says, "This is entirely in accord with the evidence of the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* that neither Kośala, nor Videha was fully Brahmanized at an early date, much less, Magadha."[1] It is to be noted that a passage of the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*[2] says that the Vedic culture found in Videha was only an offshoot from the orthodox sector of the Kuru-Pañcāla country. Besides, we find that the other factor leading to this cultural tension was the ascetic tradition of the eastern region which was greatly opposed to orthodox Vedicism. We propose to sketch in brief the characteristics and the main phases of the development of the heterodox challenge.

Heretical Teachers: Philosophy of Non-action

In this region where asceticism was a popular institution, the pioneers of the heterodox culture had been the six heretical teachers. Each of them was commonly described as 'well known and of repute as a sophist, revered by the people, a man of experience who has long been a recluse, old and well-stricken in years.'[3]

The ascetics known as Ājīvikas, headed by Makkhali Gosāla, appear to have led a popular movement in pre-Buddhist times. Gosāla is said to have preached the doctrine of non-action and pre-determination.[4] The Ājīvikas maintained that 'there is not cause, either ultimate or remote, for the depravity of being; they become depraved without reason and without cause. . . . There is no such thing as power or energy, or human strength or human vigour. . . . They bent this way or that way by their Fate.'[5] Fatalism was the core of Gosāla's doctrine.

Pūraṇa Kassapa also preached the theory of non-action (akiriyā) in denial of the doctrine of 'Karma.'[6] This reaction against orthodox tradition was carried further by him as he condemned alms, sacrifices, and offerings. Ajita Kesakambali also holds the same view that there is no result of good or bad action and there is nothing like this world or the next.[7] According to him, knowledge does not enhance spiritual qualities and evil deeds bring no demerit.[8] After death each component element of

[1]Oldenberg, *Buddha*, p. 400; cf. Fick, *SONEIBT*, p. 13; Dutt, *OGCI*, I, pp. 258-59. see also *Ved. Ind.*, II, p. 117.

[2]*ŚBr.*, I.4.1.10-14.

[3]*DBud.*, Pt. I, p. 66.

[4]*Suṃ. Vilās.*, I, pp. 143 f, 161-63.

[5]*DBud.*, Pt. I, pp. 71-72; cf. Basham, op. cit., Introduction, p. I.

[6]*DBud.*, Pt. I, pp. 69-70.

[7]*DBud*,, Pt. I, p. 73.

[8]ibid, I, p. 73.

the body, *i.e.*, earth, water, fire, air, and space, dissolves and returns to its respective source. Pakudha Kaccāyana rejects rebirth and the theory of Karma and pleads in favour of atomism. He shows a strong materialist approach.[1] Sañjaya Belaṭṭhiputta abstains from drawing dogmatic conclusions and declines from forwarding speculative views.[2] He is rightly estimated to be an agnostic.[3] Nigaṇṭha Nātaputta, identified with Mahāvtra,[4] opposed the Brāhmaṇical hierarchy, the Vedic cult of sacrifice, and ceremonialism.

The Causes of the Cultural Tension

The great momentum of intellectual upheaval starting from the Upaniṣads culminated in the agnostic movements of the positivists and materialists in pre-Buddhist northern India. Several factors gave immense impetus to the increase of asceticism. The discovery[5] of iron in about 1000-900 BC led to the colonization of this region by clearing the forest.[6] The eastward advance of the Vedic people brought about social transformations also. The pressing 'Völkerwanderung' from the northwest which pushed[7] the Vedic people down to the southeast brought them in active contact with the hostile culture of this region. But in spite of the tension between the two sets of traditions the process of cultural assimilation was at work. With the further development of the rational thought-flux positivists' movement became popular among the wanderers. Their materialistic view-point was diametrically opposed to the Vedic tradition. It is rightly estimated: 'Perhaps of greatest importance, however, were the theories of natural causation, of the operation of scientific laws in nature as opposed to arbitrary control by gods or by priests through the sacrifice.'[8] This trend of scientific analysis and the theory of natural causality originating in the Upaniṣadic speculations developed in agnostic proportions among the heretical teachers. This seems to be the genesis of the theory of non-action rooted in pre-determinism and fatalism but it, however, was suited most to the wanderers' life free from the familial and worldly responsibilities.

This pessimistic tendency was also the outcome of a society undergoing the strains of transformation. Social life was constantly disturbed by monarchical rivalries. The autocratic centralized power expanded its control over every sphere of life at the cost of the autonomous tribal societies where men led a happy life on the basis of equality and fraternity.

[1] *DBud.*, I, p. 74.
[2] ibid., I, p. 75.
[3] G.C. Pande, *SOB*, p. 350.
[4] The view is forwarded by Bühler and Jacobi, *Kalpasūtra*, p. 6; cf. *SBE*, XLV, p. XIV.
[5] *BSOAS*, 1956, p. 46. R.S. Sharma, *The Indian Historical Review*, II, no. I, pp. 2-3.
[6] Kosambi, op. cit., pp. 116ff.
[7] Buddha Prakash, *Political and Social Movement in Ancient Panjab*, pp. 23ff.
[8] *BSOAS*, 1956, p. 52.

This factor must also have contributed to the development of the pessimistic outlook which induced the people to escape from life.

The ideal of escape in view of the ineffectibility of action radically differed from the orthodox belief in Karma, rebirth, and efficacy of sacrifice. This antagonistic trend in this region gradually developed and its popular movement rather challenged the Vedic way of life. The Sāṃkhya system of philosophy too had been originally contrary to Vedicism which pleaded non-ritualism and pluralism against Vedic monism.[1] These materialistic trends including the Nāstika or Cārvāka profess that the five gross elements—earth, water, fire, wind, and air—are the original causes of 'ātmā,' and after the dissolution of these five elements living beings cease to exist.[2] They believe in the individual soul of a passing nature which ends with the body and that there is neither virtue nor vice and no world beyond.[3] These different schools of heretical teachings formed a cross-current of polemics against Vedicism though they did not possess a consistent philosophy in the modern sense of the term.[4]

5. Buddhist Revolt

The cultural tension between the orthodox and the heterodox traditions culminated in the *c.* 6th Century BC. The revolutionary zeal of the ascetic movement had been a challenge to Vedic orthodoxy and also a problem to the society of this region. The heretics with their downright agnosticism and unorganized body of free-lancing wanderers devoid of any well-defined moral principles, were a problem to society. There was still room for a teacher who could reiterate the challenge against the orthodox socio-religious dogmas and at the same time offer some sort of salvation to the society. At this critical juncture the Buddha came to give an impetus to the socio-religious revolution of this region. The main line of the Buddhist attack on Vedic culture may be traced on the basis of the information supplied by the Buddhist sources. It is to be noted, however, that the Buddha attacked the rigid character of the Vedic social system in uncompromising terms and launched a movement against the ritualistic dogmas, but his attack was rather of an intellectual nature.

The Buddha against Caste System and Hierarchy

The identification of caste with birth is seriously resented in the Buddhist canonical works. The Buddha is represented as saying that it is not by

[1]*ERE*, XI, p. 189; Garbe, Aniruddha's Commentary on the original Parts of Vedāntin Mahādeva's Commentary on the *Sāṃkhya Sūtra*, Calcutta, Introduction XX-XXII; *SBE*, XXXIV, p. 295; Colebrooke, *The Sāṃkhya Kārikā*, Calcutta. 1887; p. 13; cf. Chattopadhyaya, *Lokāyata*, 1959, p. 379.

[2]*SBE*, XLV, p. 236, VSS. 7-8.

[3]ibid, p. 237 VSS. 11-13.

[4]Basham, op. cit., p. 12.

birth that one is a Brāhmaṇa or a non-Brāhmaṇa . . . it is decided by work;[1] only the ignorant say that one is Brāhmaṇa by birth.[2] In relation to Arhatship caste differences are worthless. As fire is burnt of every wood[3] so the members of every caste are able to attain śramaṇahood.[4] It seems that the Buddha was not against the Brāhmaṇas having spiritual qualities who are equated with Śramaṇas.[5] But the priestly class representing the Brāhmaṇa caste best in orthodox society became the object of uncompromising attack. It is said[6] that by dint of their craftiness the Brāhmaṇas make sacrifices the means of producing wealth for themselves.

The Buddha, while dealing with the social problems, kept in view the ideal of asceticism, in relation to which the Varṇa structure was rejected outright. But he could not escape the considerations of the class divisions of society which had a firm grip on the Vedic fold and those who came in contact with it.

The non-ritualistic Buddhist creed based on non-violence and rationalism made salvation a personal responsibility. This shrinkage of spiritual control on social action tremendously increased the canvas of secular enterprise. It is no wonder that the Buddhist ideologies suited well the market economy of urban complex and naturally got the patronage of the Vaiśyas. Their socio-religious position seems to have become better in the heterodox circle. Besides, the Kṣatriyas' social position is held supreme invariably placing Brāhmaṇas second to them. The Buddha is presented to have maintained that Kṣatriyas are the best among bipeds.[7] This assertion of the Kṣatriyas' superiority in comparison to the Brāhmaṇas is emphasized in the *Ambaṭṭha Sutta* wherein the Brāhmaṇa blood is held inferior to that of the Kṣatriyas.[8]

In estimating the relative changes of the social positions of the two upper classes enunciated in the Buddhist literature it can be pointed out that the inferior social position of Brāhmaṇas in the eastern (Magadha) region was the actual state of affairs. The Jātaka stories, together with the early Pāli texts, mirror a society where Vedic culture did not get a favourable ground to develop. The heterodox east could not furnish the Brāhmaṇas with the subsistence of the orthodox standard. Consequently most Brāhmaṇas in this region were reduced to the worldly avocations typified by the *Dasabrāhmaṇa Jātaka*.[9] But it can be equally argued that the 'Odariya'[10] (gluttons) and the so-called Brāhmaṇas (Brāhmaṇa-bandhu)

[1]*Sut. Nip.*, *SBE*, X, Pt. II, Vs.650.
[2]ibid, Vs.367.
[3]*DBud.*, II, pp. 125ff.
[4]*Cullavagga*, ed. J. Kashyap, p. 356.
[5]*Dhammapada*, *SBE*, X, Pt. I, p. 51.
[6]*Sut. Nip.*, Vs.306ff.
[7]*Sam. Nik.*, ed. J. Kashyap, VI, p. 8; *SBE*, XXVIII, *Vinaya Texts*, p. 134.
[8]*Dīg. Nik.*, *ed.* J. Kashyap, I, pp. 84-5; *DBud.*, Pt. I, pp. 119-22.
[9]Fausböll, *Jātakas*, VI, pp. 361-65; *GS*, 25, 266.
[10]ibid, VI, p. 208; *G.* 898; N. K. Dutt, *OGCI*, p. 371ff.

are neatly contrasted with the 'proper' Brāhmaṇas.[1] Besides, this sort of discrepancy finds a parallel in the Kṣatriya class also as the ordinary Kṣatriya folk fell equally into the category of Kṣatriya-bandhu taking up unbecoming professions. The Buddhas' assertion of the primacy of the Kṣatriyas seems to be the positive aspect of his attack on the priestly pretentions. Despite the fact that Buddhism, as was the case with Jainism, originated from the social milieu of the Kṣatriya republic, it can hardly be branded as a Kṣatriya movement for the very reason that its ideologies which were earnestly tried by Aśoka could not satisfy the aspirations of the new Kṣatriya class right from the 6th century BC. On the other hand this class derived legitimation and inspiration for the affairs of the state in overwhelming proportions from the cultural ideologies envisaged by the Brāhmaṇas.

Buddhist Challenge to Vedism

The intellectual ferment culminating in the questioning of the traditional line of thought in the Upaniṣads had already reached a rebellious proportion.[2] The Buddhist texts elaborate the heterodox attack on sacrifice, ritualism, and authority of the Vedas. To the Buddha, the recitation of stanzas (hymns) does not form the Dharma of those who see things rightly[3] for blind repetition of the Vedas generation to generation is 'a vain and empty thing.'[4] The Vedas were 'a waterless desert, a pathless jungle and perdition'[5] and are branded even as low art.[6] He exhorts that no one should be misled by the traditional authority, rather one should accept a thing after personal verification.[7] He dishonoured the cult of sacrifice because it involved useless expenses and payment of heavy fees to the Brāhmaṇas.[8] He condemned outright the sacrifices involving animal killing.[9] The priests were blamed for the bloody sacrifices by the Śūdras, Vaiśyas and Kṣatriyas.[10] From the economic point of view the basic cause of the general opposition to animal sacrifice lay undoubtedly in the transformation of the society from the pastoral to agricultural life.[11]

[1]Fick, op. cit., 1920, pp. 192-93.
[2]Hopkins, *Religions of India*, 1895, p. 280.
[3]*Sut. Nip.*, *SBE*, X, Pt. II, p. 13.
[4]*D. Bud.*, Pt. I, p. 306.
[5]*Dig. Nik.*, *PTS*, I, *Tevijja Sutta*, p. 248.
[6]*D. Bud.*, *Brahmajāla Sutta*; see also *Maj. Nik.*, *PTS*, II, p. 169; *Dīg. Nik.*, vide *D. Bud.*, I, p. 305; *Sum. Vilās.*, *PTS*, II, p. 399; see also Oldenberg, *Buddha*, pp. 172.
[7]*Aṇg. Nik.*, *PTS*, I, pp. 189-90.
[8]*Sut. Nip.*, Vss., 300ff.
[9]*Saṃ. Nik.*, Pt. I, *PTS*, p. 76; *Iti-Vuttaka*, ed., Ernst Windisch, p. 21; ibid, tr. Woodward, *The Minor Anthologies of Pāli Canon*, Pt. II, London, 1948, p. 131; *Dīg. Nik.*, ed., J. Kashyap, p. 109; see also B. M. Barua, *Pre-Buddhist Indian Philosophy*, p. 193fn.
[10]*Sut. Nip.*, *SBE*, X, Vss., 291-313.
[11]Kosambi, *ISIH*, pp. 157-58.

The Linguistic basis of difference between the Orthodox and Heterodox Traditions

One of the most important factors contributing to the growth of two rival traditions of culture is the linguistic difference between the Vedic orthodoxy and heterodox culture. The Brāhmaṇa class, fully conscious of the purity of its language,[1] retained the esoteric character of the Vedic Sanskrit in ritual and sacrifice. Yet a 'Kultursprache,' i.e., its refined vernacular form of speech for the 'Śiṣṭas,' was developed keeping it away from the impurities[2] which was used in education.[3]

Sanskrit, representing Vedic culture, had to encounter a serious challenge from the heterodox movement from the *c.* 6th century BC onwards. The popular dialect in opposition to Sanskrit was adopted by Jainism and Buddhism to represent the heterodox culture. It is said that two brothers, who were Bhikkhus converted from the Brâhmaṇa class, excelling in speech and pronunciation, proposed to the Buddha: 'The Bhikkhus corrupt the words of the Buddha by repeating them in their own dialect. Let us, lord, put the word of the Buddha into chhandas (i.e., Sanskrit Verse).' The Buddha declined this proposal with the argument[4] that Sanskrit would be an obstacle in approaching the masses due to its difficult and refined form. The vernacular dialect of the east[5] was so much popularised by Buddhism that the great Buddhist emperor Aśoka made it the *lingua franca* of his empire. Thus we find that these two kinds of speech representing mutually hostile traditions contributed to the cultural tension.

6. The Social Impact of the Heterodox Movement

The philosophy of the Buddha's pragmatic preachings was rooted in the misery of the phenomenal world. It includes the principles of anattā (absence of soul), anicca (impermanence), pratītyasamutpādas or paṭiccasamuppāda (dependent origination), and Nirvāṇa (cessation of misery) as its cardinal points. Since the world is not static but dynamic, perpetually moving, as if a point-instant,[6] and the origination of the beings are dependent, conditioned and relative, the existence is momentary, impermanent, and leading to misery. Only the state of Nirvāṇa, to be achieved through moral life and superior knowledge, is cessation from it. The theory of anattā saps off individual from his worldly settings. The absence of the theory of any 'divine grace' makes liberation a personal responsibility. Heralding radical change from the tradition, the Buddhist doctrine of salvation rejects the intermediatory agency of the priest.

[1] *SBr.*, III.2.1.24.

[2] Agrawala, *India as Known to Pāṇini*, pp. 35, 38; *Aṣṭadhyāyī*, VI.3.120; see also *ŚBr.*, *SBE*, XXVI, pp. 31-33; ibid, III.2.1.22-7.

[3] Thomas, F.W., *JRAS*, 1904, p. 474; Keith, *HSL*, 1928, p. 8.

[4] *Cullavagga*, V.33.1.

[5] Keith, *HSL*, p. 27.

[6] Stcherbastsky, *Buddhist Logic*, p. 119.

The Saṅgha and State

The ascetic movement of the free-lancing wanderers must have been confronted with the question of its survival in face of the ever-expanding authority of kings in various walks of life. But an organized body of missionaries submitting to and serving the interest of the central power could enlist the greater patronage of the state than the champions of Vedism who with their old forms of ritual envisaged to control the political power or at least managed to share it. Like Makkhaliputta Gosāla[1] and Mahāvīra, the Buddha founded a Saṅgha. He seemed to have submitted[2] the saṅgha to the jurisdiction of state only internally keeping up the ideals of the tribal republics. It must have been the considerations of the political power which led the Buddha to interdict the entrance of the slaves and the state personnel into the Saṅgha who were granted compensation of liberty in heaven after rebirth.[3] This seems to be an important point of compromise between the Saṅgha and the State. Further, the missionary activity of the Buddha must have served the cause of the State for we find that Prasenajit was relieved from the trouble of military operations against the turbulent activity of Aṅgulimāla as the Buddha got him converted to his faith and made him join the Saṅgha.[4] The Buddha being presented as invariably asserting the superiority of the Kṣatriyas may have been a diplomatic move of the Buddhist circles in order to curry favour with the kings and nobility. It is to be noted that most of the kings and republics of the Buddha's time either embraced his creed or patronized it.[5] An interesting account of the compromising attitude of the Buddha is recorded in the *Sāmaññaphala Sutta* wherein Ajātaśatru is absolved of the sin of parricide without a word of condemnation showing his exceptionally lenient outlook towards rulers. On this point Smith comments: "The stern and fearless reprobation of deed of exceptional atrocity which we should expect from a great teacher is wholly wanting in Buddha's words, and is poorly compensated for the politeness of a courtier."[6] Thus it seems that the Buddhist Saṅgha and the State had come closer to each other which must have been at the cost of orthodox traditions.

Political Ideology of Heterodoxy

Buddhism formulated a political ideology which suited its growth. The spirit of the age appeared antagonistic to the development of a sect preaching renunciation for the achievement of the highest goal of life. The monarchical policy of expansion was breeding feuds and rivalries among

[1]*Bhagavatī Sūtra*, Sect., XV Sūtras 539ff.

[2]It seems that the Buddhist Saṅgha had submitted to the jurisdiction of Aśoka, vide Sarnath Inscription, Basak, *Aśokan Inscriptions*, pp. 146ff.

[3]*Vin.*, I, 75.

[4]*Aṅgulimāla Sutta, Maj. Nik.*, ed., J. Kashyap, 1959, pp. 344-45.

[5]Rhys Davids, *Buddhist India*, pp. 8ff.; *AIU*, pp. 5, 21, 26-27.

[6]Smith, *The Early History of India*, 3rd ed., 1914, p. 34.

the kings. The autocratic behaviour of the kings was bound to disrupt the older tribal values. The materialist thought of the times like those of Bṛhaspati, Kapila, and other innumerable bands of wanderers seems to have provided the ideological support to the ambitious policy of kings. Such political behaviour must have laid the foundation of a sort of science of polity based on Lokāyata or positivist tradition which made the compilation of the *Arthasāśtra* possible later on. That this materialist polity had never been formulated on high moral principles is clear from the spirit of Kauṭilya's treatise. The Brāhmaṇa-priests too with their elaborated royal sacrifices ideologically backed the political power.

The Buddhist thinkers were bound to be against this tradition of polity which provoked the rulers to get themselves engaged in constant struggle. Under the exigencies of the situation the Buddha advanced the ideal of world-ruler based on ethical standards. He condemned the materialist polity, i.e., Khattavijjā (Science of the Kṣatriyas) as one of the low arts.[1] The world ruler was the political counterpart of the Tathāgata (the spiritual world-ruler). The Buddhist Cakravartī is the Dhammika monarch, who, himself righteous, rules the four quarters of the universe righteously.[2]

7. Culmination of Non-Orthodox Culture Under Aśoka

The conversion of Aśoka to the Buddhist faith was the greatest achievement of Buddhism. The promulgation of 'Dhamma' by Aśoka should be connected with the cultural background of the heretical tradition, which, being in contact with it,[3] he had imbibed from his childhood. Aśoka as a ruler of rare imagination sought to merge 'Dhamma' and politics together to all possible extent, thus bringing 'Dhamma' within state control. He parted from the tradition of recognising Vedic polity and orthodox socio-religious laws. Banning of animal sacrifice by Aśoka would have naturally been a considerable blow to orthodox Vedism—what the heterodox movement was struggling for ever since the 6th century BC. Aśoka, no doubt, urged to pay respect to the Brāhmaṇas but the image of Brāhmaṇas in his mind seems to be devoid of Vedic sacrifices. The office of the Purohita[4] was abolished and the propagation of his Dhamma was entrusted to the new cadre of officials, i.e., Dhammamahāmātras. The gradation in punishment and hierarchical pretensions of the upper classes, especially the Brāhmaṇas, supported even by Kauṭilya[5] was done away with.[6] Buddhism, which 'emphasized a broader social consciousness,' suited the social base

[1] *D Bud.*, pt. I, p. 9.

[2] *D Bud.*, pt. II, p. 169; III, pp. 62f; *Dīg. Nik., PTS*, III, p. 59, 146; *Ang. Nik., PTS*, III, p. 149.

[3] Thapar, R., *ADM*, pp. 34ff, 139-40.

[4] *The Age of the Nandas and Mauryas*, ed. Nilakanta Sastri, p. 175.

[5] IV.10.20-21.

[6] PE. IV, Bloch, *Les Inscriptions D' Aśoka*, p. 164; Hultzsch, *CII*, I, p. 125.

of his political order.'[1] There has been an attempt[2] to show that Aśoka followed the injunction of the great Mauryan prime minister but to draw any parallel between Aśoka's Dhamma and Kauṭilya's principles will be far-fetched. The Dhamma of Aśoka, based on ethics, non-violence, and non-Vedic policy of abolishing sacrifices and class privileges, was diametrically opposed to the spirit of the *Arthaśāstra* which upholds positivism in politics but duly recognises 'Varṇa' system, sacrifice, and claims of the upper classes.

Aśoka's Dhamma

Scholars have expressed different views on Aśoka's 'Dhamma,'[3] but we can safely say that he was a passive propagator of Buddhism. Aśoka introduced in the Maṅgala gatherings displays of white elephants which symbolised the descent of the Buddha from heaven.[4] He reduced the tax of Lumbini village on account of its being the birth place of the Buddha. He banned killing of some animals on Uposatha days.[5] He expressed his faith in the Buddhist triratna (Calcutta-Bairat Edict) and went on pilgrimage to the Buddhist sacred places. He constructed stūpas, vihāras, and pillars in order to popularise the faith.

The Spread of Buddhism Beyond Purathima

The proselytizing activity of Buddhism started with the foundation of

[1]Thapar, Romila, *ADM*, p. 143.

[2]Sletore, *Ancient Indian Political Thought and Institutions*, 1963, pp. 556-80.

[3]Dutt, *Aspects of Mahāyāna Buddhism and its Relation to Hīnayāna*, London, 1930, p. 20; pp. 19-21; Ghoshal, *A History of Indian Public Life*, II, 1966, pp. 251ff.

Scholars expressing views that Aśoka was a Buddhist or a lay worshipper of the Buddha are the following: Smith, *Early History of India*, p. 168; Rhys Davids, *Buddhist India*, p. 294; Bhandarkar, *Aśoka*, pp. 75-79, 81; Mookerjee, *Aśoka*, pp. 23, 69-70; Macphail, *Aśoka*, p. 28.

Those who maintain that Aśoka's 'Dhamma' comprises the original preaching of the Buddha are: Senart, *Les Inscriptions De Piyadassi*, II, p. 332; Rhys Davids *Buddhism*, pp. 226ff.

The following scholars trace affinity between Aśoka's edicts and the Buddhist scriptures:

Hultzsch, *Inscription of Aśoka*, pp. Li-Lixi, Kosambi and Hanman, *Indian Antiquary* (February 1912), pp. 37-40; Jayawiekrama, *Sutta Nipāta* (collection of Articles from the University of Ceylon Review), p. 229; Oldenberg, *Vinaya Piṭakam*, I, XLff; Pande, *SOB*, p. 15.

Some scholars had expressed the extreme views that Aśoka was a Brāhmanical Hindu.

See Rev. F. Heras, *QJMS*, XVIII, pp. 255-76; Dikshitar, *Mauryan Polity*, pp. 276-77.

Romila Thapar opines: "Dhamma was Aśoka's own invention.' But she further remarks that 'he (Aśoka) never sought to hide his support for Buddhism' vide *ADM*, p. 149.

[4]Bhandarkar, *Aśoka*, 3rd ed., p. 154; see also *Indian Antiquary*, V, pp. 257-58; also *Dīg. Nik.*, *PTS*, pp. 21f; Thomas, *The Life of Buddha as Legend and History*, 1927, pp. 32ff.

[5]P.E.V.

the Saṅgha by the Great Master. In spite of the lifelong efforts of the Buddha and the missionary zeal of his followers for more than a couple of centuries Buddhism was geographically confined to the eastern region of northern India and does not seem to have made much headway towards the west which remained the stronghold of orthodox culture.[1] The Buddhist text of the period asserts that 'it is in the eastern tracts (purathimesu Janapadesu) that the Buddhas are born,' therefore the Bhikkhūs of the east are the true spokesmen of Dhamma, 'who hold opinion in accord with the Dhamma, whereas the Bhikkhūs of the west do not.'[2] The primitive Buddhism, being one of the many heterodox sects confined to a certain region, should not have assumed a threatening dimension to the orthodox Vedicism. The theoretical polemics of the Buddha against orthodoxy reminds us of many heretical teachers including even Brāhmaṇas like Pūraṇa Kassapa, Sañjaya Belaṭṭhiputta, and Pakkudha Kachchāyana. The Upaniṣadic line of thought itself shows much spirit of revolt. Barth[3] finds early Buddhism 'a Hindu phenomenon' and its primitive doctrine not easily distinguishable from the most ancient Upaniṣads. The real trouble for orthodoxy started when the Buddhist movement gained its positive success in two important directions i.e., its overwhelming political ascendency under Aśoka and its popularity among the masses. The situation would have been all the more precarious for Vedic orthodoxy when Buddhism threatened to break free from its confinement to the eastern region.

Unlike its early monkish character, the evolution of the Buddhist creed brought about the theistic elements even among the Theravādins. The early Theravāda text, Dhammapada, recommends the worship of the Buddha and his relics.[4] This internal transformation in the creed, together with the unreserved patronage of Aśoka, gave an impetus to Buddhism making it popular among the masses. Further, it led to the extension of the sphere of activity of Buddhism beyond Purathima region whose heartland was Magadha.[5] Hieun Thsiang[6] gives an interesting account of the flight of the Buddhists to the western region because of the assumed fear of Aśoka who earnestly supported the orthodox Theravādins. During Aśoka's reign Buddhism expanded all over Northern India and crossed the Vindhya mountain, extending its influence in Ceylon and other bordering countries.[7] The fantastic account of Hieun Thsiang about Aśoka's construction of stūpas must have been based on the fact that under him

[1] *CHI*, I, p. 198; Thomas, *The Life of Buddha as Legend and History*, 1927, pp. 13-14; Oldenberg, *Buddha*, p. 392.

[2] *Cullavagga*, XII, 2.16, ed. B.J. Kashyap, p. 425; *SBE*, XX, pt. III, p. 402.

[3] *Religions of India*, p. 101.

[4] *Dhammapada*, *SBE*, X, Pt. I, Vss. 195-96; *Mahāparinibbāna Sutta*, ed. Dharmarakṣita, Varanasi, pp. 194-97; Dutt, *Buddhist Monks and Monasteries in India*, p. 181.

[5] Dutt, op. cit., 1962, p. 101.

[6] Beal, *Buddhist Records. .*, I, pp. 150-51.

[7] Bhandarkar, *Aśoka*, pp. 161-67.

the country became studded with Buddhist monuments, the most important ones being at Sanchi, Bharhuta, Amaravati, Saranath, Lumbini, etc. According to S. Dutt,[1] the injunction in the *Mahāparinibbāna Sutta*[2] that 'wide spread let 'Thūpas' (Stūpas) be in all quarters,' refers to the actual piety and practice of Ashokan age.' It is held[3] that although Aśoka 'attacked the Brāhmaṇical position through indirect measures such as the abolition of animal sacrifice, he was shrewd enough not to openly antagonize this powerful factor in Indian society.'

Thus, the heterodox movement which attempted at revolutionizing the time-honoured cultural institutions in the *c.* 6th century BC came to pose a serious threat to orthodox Vedicism in about the middle of the third century BC. Buddhism, in particular, assumed a form of positive menace on account of its achievements in three main directions under Aśoka. Firstly, it got overwhelming political ascendency, relegating other religions to the background; secondly, adopting easier means of devotion and worship it became a popular movement addressing the common masses on the practical points of law; and thirdly, breaking its confinement to the eastern tract Buddhism emerged as an universal faith.

[1]*The Buddha and Five After Centuries*, p. 170.
[2]*SBE*, XI, p. 93f.n.
[3]Thapar, *ADM*, p. 104.

Chapter 2

THE CHALLENGE OF NEW SOCIO-RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES

1. The Pressure of Cultural Antagonism from the West

In the preceeding chapter we have seen the cultural tension between the orthodox tradition of the Madhyadeśa and the heterodox East, and the culmination of the Buddhist movement as a challenge to Vedism. But towards the end of the third century BC there developed a cultural tension between the farther north-west region in the Punjab and the Vedic Madhyadeśa. *The Baudhāyana Dharma Sūtra* and the *Mahābhārata* describe the social upheaval in this region which was strongly resented by the orthodoxy. The rise of the various new people and tribes in this region brought about a serious deterioration in the manners and customs from the orthodox point of view. The unhealthy practices of these people are described at length.[1] The Madrakas and Sindhu-Sauvīras, said to have belonged to the 'sinful' country, are described as Mlecchas—devoid of dharma.[2] The Madrakas are said to be wicked, untrustful, and crooked. Women freely mixed with men of all kinds. These people used to eat beef, drink wine, and laugh and cry. Any contact with them meant serious deterioration in social status. The Madraka women, being intoxicated, danced, throwing off their robes; they did not observe control in sexual matters and did whatever they like.[3]

Such an antagonistic trend might have been accelerated on account of the active contacts with theoutlandish tribes of the border region, which was intensified later by the intrusion of foreign peoples like Greeks, Scythians, Parthians, Ābhīras etc., after the decline of the Mauryas, creating chaotic conditions in society.

2. Impact of the Antagonistic Forces on the Vedic Society

The orthodox Vedic culture was seriously menaced both by the heterodox

[1] *BDS*, I.1.2.4ff.
[2] *Mbh.*, VIII.27.92f.
[3] *Mbh.*, VIII.27.73-86.

movement exerting its influence from the east and the antagonistic social trend and foreign intrusion coming from the northwest of the Madhyadeśa. The impact of these developments on the social, religious, and political life of the society was far-reaching and deep. The *Mahābhārata* and the Purāṇas present a very gloomy picture of the age, which is nothing but the Brāhmaṇic resentment against a general disruption of the orthodox institutions and the success of the heterodox movement at the cost of the Vedic tradition. This dark period is known as Kali age in the Epic and the Purāṇas.

The Kali Age

The conception of the four yugas, i.e. Kṛta or Satya, Dvāpara, Tretā, and Kali, spanning several thousands of years, may be taken as a conventional disposition of the Brāhmaṇas to glorify the past and to describe the advancement of human history with increasing degeneration till the entire aêon is completed, and the cycle restarts with the golden age of Kṛta.[1] But here we are concerned with the description of the Kali age as the most degenerating time in orthodox culture. Nowhere the Brāhmaṇa psychology is so much deranged as in the delineation of the horror of this age. In spite of the possible exaggeration, the description betrays a sense of despondency among the Brāhmaṇas over the utter disintegration of the orthodox culture. Their great anxiety, at the same time, shows the sense of responsibility they felt as the custodian of the Vedic tradition.

Impact on Social System

The prophetic description of the Kali age shows the disruptive impact of the anti-Vedic cultural tradition on the social institutions of the orthodox fold. It is said that the Varṇa system will be disintegrated as the Brāhmaṇas, Kṣatriyas, and Vaiśyas will disappear and all men will be of one order.[2] The Brāhmaṇas will perform the acts that should be performed by the Śūdras.[3] The Śūdras will address others with lower-grade speech, while the Brāhmaṇas will address others saying 'Noble Sir.'[4] The Brāhmaṇas will eat everything[5] and the twice-born will kill each other.[6] All the three upper classes, diminished in virtue, asceticism, and truth, will be equal to the Śūdras.[7] The Kṣatriyas will be the thorn of the earth.[8] The whole world will be filled with Mlecchas, and will become riteless and

[1]see for different interpretations of the Age, *ABr.*, VII.7; *Manu,* IX. 301.
[2]*Mbh.*, III.188.40-41.
[3]ibid, III.188.26; 111.186.28.
[4]ibid, 186.33(b)
[5]ibid, 186.27.
[6]ibid, 188.17-18.
[7]*Mbh.*, III.188.17-18
[8]ibid, 188.32.

non-sacrificing.[1] Men will kill Brāhmaṇas and appropriate their wealth. Being persecuted by the Śūdras and afflicted with fear, the twice-borns will rove over the world but none will protect them.[2] Suffering from robbers and overburdened by taxes, the Brāhmaṇas will do all types of improper work and become servants of the Śūdras.[3] On account of great wars the earth will be frightful to look at and there will be a dire scarcity of male population.[4] "Respected Sir" will be the address of the Śūdras and "Good Sir" of the Brāhmaṇas.[5] The rules of the varṇāśrama will be held in utter negligence.[6] The Śūdras will perform the duties of the Brāhmaṇas and the Brāhmaṇas that of the Śūdras.[7] The pure line of the Kṣatriyas and the Vaiśyas will almost be extinct,[8] leading to the dominance of the Śūdras.[9]

The pitiful plight of the Brāhmaṇas is also described. "The Brāhmaṇas, who are less educated in the Vedas and one less fortunate and powerful, honour the Śūdras with flowers, decoratives, and other auspicious things. Though, thus honoured, the Śūdras do not care to favour the Brāhmaṇas even with a kind glance . . . The Brāhmaṇas, who depend upon the Śūdras for their livelihood, surrender to them, when they are seated in vehicles, with a view to honour them with praises and teach them the Vedas.[10] The Brāhmaṇas being spiritually connected with the Śūdras will be equal to them in matters of bed, seat, and dining.[11]

Women will abandon their poor husbands and go to the prosperous ones.[12] Money will be the dominant factor in all the spheres of life.[13] Women will hanker after enjoyment and become very weak in their moral character.[14] They will disobey their husbands.[15] Being wicked in habits, they will be desirous of union with wicked people.[16] On account of devastating wars with foreigners the male population will be scarce, which will oblige the

[1] *Mbh.*, 188.29.
[2] ibid, BE. III.190.58-59.
[3] ibid, 188.61-62.
[4] *Yuga Purāṇa* of *Gārgī Saṃhitā*, *JBORS*, XVI, 1930, pp. 24, 27ff.; ibid, XIV, Vss., 88. Scholars suggest it to be a work of the first century BC. Some of the foreign scholars consider it to be a late work of the second or third century AD; see *JBORS*, XVI, pp. 46ff.
[5] ibid, XVI, p. 23.
[6] *Viṣ. P.*, VI.1.10(a).
[7] *Bḍ. P.*, II.31.42.
[8] *Vāyu P.*, 58.38; cf. *Mat. P.*, 144.38.
[9] *Viṣ. P.*, VI.1.52.
[10] *Kūrma P.*, I.30.17-22.
[11] ibid, I.30.6; cf. *Mat. P.*, 144.39; *Vāyu P.*, 59.39; *Bḍ. P.*, II.31.40.
[12] *Viṣ. P.*, VI.1.18.
[13] ibid, VI.1.19.
[14] ibid, VI.1.21.
[15] *Viṣ. P.*, VI.1.29.
[16] ibid, VI.1.31.

women to draw ploughs, till the soil, wield bows and guard fields.[1]

Impact on Religious System

The *Mahābhārata* and the Purāṇas give almost an identical picture of the loss of Vedic religion in the Kali age. It is said[2] that the Brāhmaṇas will abstain from sacrifices, and from the study of the Vedas and prayers, while the Śūdras will perform them. Towards the end of the age the utterings of the Vedas will become futile.[3] The Non-Āryans will be following the religion of the Āryans.[4] Brāhmaṇas under the disguise of ascetics will earn wealth by trade, and filled with ignorance, bearing the outward symbols of religion, they will afflict the people of the earth while roving about for alms.[5] They will speak ill of the Vedas, the Dharmaśāstras and the Purāṇas, and will not observe any vow or sacrifices.[6] All rites and sacrifices will cease and festivities and joy disappear.[7] The whole world will become Mleccha and men will no more gratify the celestials by performing the 'Śrāddha' ceremony.[8] The Śūdras will explain 'dharma' and the Brāhmaṇas will settle their duties according to such interpretations.[9] Abandoning the celestials, people will worship the bones etc.[10] The aśramas of the great ṛṣis, teaching institutions of the Brāhmaṇas, the places sacred to gods, sacrificial grounds and sacred tanks will be disfigured by the constructions of tombs and walls containing bones etc.[11] Here we find resentment against the popularity of Buddhist Stūpas. There will be Vṛṣala-(Śūdra) Bhikṣus wearing matted hair and bark garment.[12] The people will be mixed with heretics.[13] The Śūdras observing with constancy self-disciplinary vows, will doubtlessly officiate at sacrifices, and repeating the sacred texts will attend the sacrificial fire, perform lengthy ceremonials etc. with hymns ushered in with the mystic syllable '*Om*.'[14] The people will become wandering beggars defying the gods, the Brāhmaṇas, and the Vedas.[15] Non-Vedic texts will be the authority for their heretical acts, and they will mix with these anti-Vedic sectaries.[16] These wandering mendicants will alarm the masses with their bad aspirations, bad education, bad

[1] *JBORS*, XVI, p. 26.
[2] *Mbh.*, III.186.27-28.
[3] *Mbh.*, III.186.33.
[4] *JBORS*, XVI, p. 23,Vs. 97.
[5] *Mbh.*, III.186.39-41.
[6] *Kūrma Purāṇa*, I.30.8-9; cf. *Viś. P.*, VI.1.10, 39, 49; *Mbh.*, III.186.26.
[7] *Mbh.*, III.188.29.
[8] ibid, 188.45.
[9] ibid, 188.63.
[10] ibid, 188.64(a).
[11] ibid, 188.65(a), 66.
[12] *JBORS*, XVI, p. 23,Vs. 100; 103.
[13] ibid, Vs. 100.
[14] ibid, p. 23,Vss. 104-7.
[15] *Viṣ. P.*, VI.1.51.
[16] *Kūrma P.*, I.30.10-11,

customs, and bad earnings.[1] It is said that there will be various sects in vogue whose followers will be Saṃnyāsins in red garments, Kāpālins,[2] and others. The hypocrites will have their bodies marked with Vedic symbols .... The Śūdras will be experienced in the Vedas. The Sūdra kings will perform Aśvamedha sacrifices, and the people will serve their own ends even by killing women, children, and cows ..... In spite of all the Vedas being in existence, it would seem that there were no Vedas.[3]

Impact on Polity of the Vedic Tradition

Brāhmaṇical polity does not approve of a non-Kṣatriya king. It enjoins upon the king to protect the varṇāśramadharma and uphold the ideals of the Vedic tradition. But the accounts of the Kali age testifies to the overthrow of the polity of Vedic traditions. It is said that in this age Śūdra kings will be the expounders of the religions of the non-Vedic people.[4] The *Mahābhārata* also says that in this age the earth will be ruled by many Mleccha kings.[5] It is declared that 'these sinful kings addicted to falsehood will govern their subjects on principles that are false. Sovereignty will be possessed by the Andhras, Śakas, Pulindas, Yavanas, Kāmbojas, Vālhikas and Ābhīras.'[6] In the *Yuga Purāṇa*, the terrible panic created by the Yavana inroads is described.[7] They are said to have brought the havoc of war with them. The mighty Śaka chief Āmlāṭa will massacre men of all the four castes. It is said that kings of rude and violent temper, given to falsehood and unrighteousness, will kill women, children, and cows, . . . They will be of limited power, and will have a rapid rise and fall. Their lives will be short . . . They will display but little 'Dharma.'[8]

Evaluation of the Kali Age Tradition

The traditional conception of the Kali age and its thorough-going generalised descriptions, marked by the typical Brāhmaṇical way of theorizing to the extent of losing all chronological order,[9] hardly presents a proper historical sequence to help our study. The description, however, yields valuable information regarding the general disintegration of the social, religious, and political institutions of the Vedic society and a deep impact of the antagonistic traditions felt by the Brāhmaṇas. We find great Brāhmaṇic resentment, which, certainly, represents the sentiment of the orthodox people in general, and of the Brāhmaṇas in particular, against

[1] *Kūrma P.*, I.30,4; *Mat. P.*, 144.35-36; *Vāyu P.*, 58.36; *Bḍ. P.*, II.31.36.
[2] *Mat. P.*, 144.40.
[3] *Mat. P.*, 144.47; *Vāyu P.*, 58.41ff.
[4] *Bḍ. P.*, II.31.41; cf. *Mat. P.*, 144-40(a); cf. *Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa*, Ch. 126; *Brahma P.*, Ch. 228.
[5] *Mbh.*, III.186.29.
[6] ibid, BE. 188.35-36.
[7] *JBORS*, XVI, p. 24.
[8] *Viṣ. P.*, IV.24.18, IV.24.19-25; *Vāyu P.*, 99.387-412; *Bḍ. P.*, III.74.190-214; *Mat. P.*, 273.25-33.
[9] *Viṣ. P.*, VI.1.45-46.

the unprecedented blow to the Varṇa order, the disruption of the Vedic religious system, and the overthrow of the orthodox polity. The factors leading to this situation were the dominance of the heretics, especially Buddhists, and the successive invasions and rule of the foreign people. The social uprising of the Śūdra class made the conditions all the more precarious. Brāhamaṇic authors have attacked the activities of all the four Varṇas in general but they have taken special care in condemning the deviation of the Brāhmaṇas and the Śūdras. The descriptions about the women expose the decay in morality, social manners, and customs. They are said to have threatened family life.[1] The political rule of the non-Kṣatriyas was another phenomenon of grave concern to the Brāhmaṇas.

Besides the above mentioned factors of cultural degeneration, its most vital cause seems to have been the social impact of the economic transformation which seriously disturbed the institution of family and the interrelationship of the four Varṇas. The *Arthaśāstra* testifies to the fact that the process of clearing the virgin land[2] for agriculture continued in the Mauryan period. That it continued subsequently also is evidenced by Manu. Unlike the comparatively poor subsistence provided by hunting and food-gathering, at times combined with the slash-and-burn cultivation practised by the primitive tribes, especially those inhabiting the border lands of the higher culture, the progress of agricultural economy must have contributed to the growth of population. To some extent this rise in population was both the cause and result of the ever mounting number of tribal labourers who were put on to cultivate[3] the land by the upper Varṇas, and they, at best, approximated[4] the Śūdra's social position. It must have swelled up the Varṇa fold at the lower level exerting pressure on the social structure of the orthodox culture which is so acutely felt by the authors of our times. The continued deforestation[5] together with the land grants, much extolled under the Kali age provision, seem to have further accelerated this process. The precarious existence afforded by food-gathering is contrasted to the better means of subsistence provided by agriculture, pastoralism, and commerce in the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*.[6] It is said that the earth is milked (cultivated) by god, sages, nāgas, ancesters etc.[7] In the Kali age the expansion of agriculture for commercial purposes[8] put hardship on young calves and even the low lands and river banks were brought under cultivation.[9] Most people, including the Cāṇḍalas, took up Vaiśyas'

[1] *Mbh.*, III.188.35; *Bhāg. P.*, XII.3.42.
[2] Kosambi, *The Culture and Civilization of Ancient India . . .*, p. 143.
[3] Thapar, Romila, "The Role of the Economy in Mauryan Politics," *Readings in Indian Economic History*, ed. B.N. Ganguli, pp. 25-26.
[4] *Manu*, X.41.
[5] *Mbh.*, III.188.56.
[6] I.13.83-84.
[7] I.13.90-91.
[8] *Mbh.*, III.188.51 and 43.
[9] ibid, III.188.26-27; *HV. P.*, III.3.18.

professions[1] and made profit by deceitful means,[2] thus, doing away with the Varṇa distinctions.[3] The mobility of population in economic pursuits[4] seriously disturbed the family integration.[5] The economic greed of women made them desert their husbands.[6] The children showed much individualistic behaviour.[7] The dominant role of wealth antagonistically effects the life pattern. A wealthy person, who manipulates dharma and justice in his favour,[8] becomes of high birth and of good conduct. The progress of trade and industry from the Mauryan times onwards must have disturbed the traditional functions of the classes, as the people belonging to all the Varṇas are said to be taking up art and craft as their vocations.[9] Even agriculture was deserted,[10] in favour of industry. In fact, a closer assessment of the impact of economic transformation on the structure of values, ideologies, and social behaviour will require an independent study.

What we are concerned with here is only to note the underlying historical forces in the formulation of the Kaliyuga notion, which gave spurt to the Brāhmaṇic role during the period of our study. Although the attempt at visualizing the traditional concepts in historical perspective at times involves considerable risk, the basic factor contributing to the Kali age conditions unmistakably appears to be rooted in the economic changes which took a vigorous course from the Mauryan times onwards. Broadly speaking the expansion of agriculture, progress of trade and industry, growth and mobility of population, cropping up of the urban complex, bringing in its trail individualistic tendency and the economic ethics of profit motivation, caused alarming fissures in the orthodox social norms. Despite the corporate life of the artisans and trading community, organised into guilds, the common folk in the urban society was provided with a greater scope of options in life.

The operation of these economic forces can be traced from sixth century BC. The economy of the Magadhan State, although flourishing in peaceful conditions,[11] was still under the supervision of powerful rulers. From the traditional point of view also, the inception of the Kali age can be demarcated from the beginning of the rule of the Nandas.[12] Mahāpadmananda was the first Śūdra ruler in the orthodox tradition. But the general anarchical condition seems to have started only after the end of the strong

[1] *Mbh.*, III.188.18 and 26.
[2] *Vāyu P.*, 58.52.
[3] *Mbh.*, III.188.40, 62-63.
[4] ibid, III.188.43; *Bhāg. P.*, XII. Ch. 36; *HV. P.*, III.4.28ff.
[5] ibid, III.4.27.
[6] *Mbh.*, III.188.42-44.
[7] ibid, III.188.42-46; *Bhāg. P.*, XII.3.45.
[8] *Bhāg. P.*, XII.3.2-4.
[9] *Vāyu. P.*, 58.51; *HV. P.*, III.3.20; III.2.8.
[10] *HV. P.*, III.3-20-1.
[11] Thapar, *ADM*, p. 72.
[12] Hazra, *Purānic Records on the Hindu Rites and Customs*, 1940, p. 206.

rule of Aśoka.[1] In fact, the decline of the Mauryas after Aśoka led to the break-up of the bureaucratic control over economic forces and its adverse effects on society created a chaos depicted as the Kali age which continued upto the early centuries of the Christian era. Inspite of possible exaggerations woven into the description of this dark age of Kali, the chaotic condition painted therein contains historical truth. The authors of the great Epic and "the present Purāṇas being Brāhmaṇas, it is not expected that the picture, they themselves presented before us, of their own degradation and humiliation on the one hand and the rise of the servile Śūdras on the other, should be totally false."[2]

Thus we find that the orthodox culture of the Madhyadeśa was threatened by the antagonistic tendencies of both the eastern and western regions. This menace was made more acute by the social impact of the economic forces, especially from the third century BC onwards. These cultural traits, posing a challenge to Vedicism, continued throughout the most part of our period and a parallel attempt was made by the Brāhmaṇas to end the chaotic conditions and set the orthodox society right.

3. Rise of Non-Vedic Religious Systems

There appeared quite a different cultural development towards the south-western region of the Madhyadeśa. It was the rise of Bhāgavatism whose religious system originated among the Sātvata, Vṛṣṇi[3] and Andhaka Septs of the Yādava clan. The *Mahābhārata* and the Purāṇas connect the Sātvatas and the Bhojas, belonging to the southern quarter,[4] with the Yadus (Yādavas) of the Vedic times.[5] who were held as 'dāsas' or barbarians by the orthodox people.[6] It is not less interesting to note that the Vṛṣṇis and Andhakas are described in the *Mahābhārata* itself as Vrātyas "ever engaged in sinful deeds" and "by nature, addicted to disreputable behaviour."[7] It is to be noted that like Jainism and Buddhism, Bhāgavatism too originated from the tribal republics[8] of the Kṣatriyas, i.e., Andhaka-Vṛṣṇis. It is significant to note that while Megasthenes mentions the

[1]Sharma, *Śūdras in Ancient India*, pp. 212-13.

[2]Hazra, op. cit., pp. 207-8.

[3]The Vṛṣṇi Sept of the Yādava clan is mentioned in *T. Saṃ.*, III.11.9.3; *TBr.*, III.10.9.15; *Bhāg. P.*, I.14.25; ibid, III.1.29.

[4]*ABr.*, VIII.14.

[5]Chanda, *The Indo-Aryan Races*, 1916, pp. 26ff.

[6]*ṚV*, X.6.210; cf. Chanda, op. cit., pp. 26ff.

[7]Vrātyāḥ saṅkliṣtakarmāṇaḥ prakṛtyaiva ca garhitāḥ Vṛṣṇyndhakāḥ katham pārtha pramāṇam bhavatā kṛtāḥ, *Mbh.*, Droṇa Prava, 143.15; Eng. tr. Cal. 2nd ed., p. 308.

[8]The republican set-up of the Vṛṣṇis is mentioned in the *Arthaśāstra* (tr. Shamashastry, p. 11) and is corroborated by the legend 'Vṛṣṇi-rājanya-gaṇa' of their coins belonging to the first century BC, vide, Allan, *BMCCAI*, pp. XLXff; cf. Benerjea, *DHI*, 1941, p. 131; Bhandarkar, *Vaiṣaṇavism, Śaivism etc.* (Collected Works, IV), p. 5.

worship of Herakles (Vāsudeva) prevalent among the Sourasenoi (Śūrasenas) in the city of Mathura, Kṛṣṇapur, and the Yamunā regions,[1] and the Buddhist texts[2] refer to Vāsudeva and Baladeva as minor deities, the inscriptions of Aśoka, although they describe Śramaṇas, Brāhmaṇas, Ājīvikas and Nirgraṅthas, are silent about this cult or its followers. It seems that till the time of Aśoka the Bhāgavata cult was confined within the Andhaka-Vṛṣṇi septs and had not developed to the prominence of a major religious system, as to be noted by him.

The Bhāgavata cult, which prescribes[3] the non-Vedic Sātvata vidhi (rites) to be followed in devotional worship of its deities, had practically no place for the ritualistic Vedism.[4] As regards the origin of theistic cult round Sātvata heroes, it can be traced 'in the stream of thought which began with the Upaniṣads.'[5] For several centuries the worship of Vāsudeva and Kṛṣṇa developed more or less independent of the Vedic orthodoxy and the influence of the Brāhmaṇas. By the time of Pāṇini,[6] Vāsudeva was definitely held as one to be worshipped, but in the *Bhagavadgītā* itself it is lamented that such great souls are rare who held Vāsudeva to be the Supreme God.[7] Even the acts ordained in the Vedas are held of little use and are disparaged in comparison to Bhāgavata theism.[8] Further, the Vṛṣṇis were not at times reverential to the Brāhmaṇas.[9]

Besides, there had been the Āgamic Pañcarātra[10] cult independent of Vedism.[11] In the *Mahābhārata*, wherein the mention of the Pañcarātra cult is made, the seven Citra-Śikhaṇḍin Ṛṣis are said to have proclaimed on Mount Meru a Śāstra which was made to accord with the Vedas[12]; although it is said to have been composed for the use of the common people.[13]

It is, however, to be noted that the traditions[14] of the eastern region crystallized in Jainism and Buddhism and that of the theistic Bhāgavatism

[1]McCrindle, *Ancient India as Described by Megasthenes and Arrian*, p. 201.
[2]Bhandarkar, op. cit., p. 3.
[3]*Mbh.*, VI.62.39.
[4]Kosambi, *Bhagvan Buddha*, Delhi, 1956, (Hindi), pp. 25-26.
[5]Bhandarkar, op. cit., p.9.
[6]Pāṇini, IV.3.98 and Patañjali thereunder.
[7]*Gītā*, VII.19, 24; XVIII.67.
[8]*Gītā*, II.46; see also II.42-45.
[9]*Jātaka* (tr. Cowell) IV, pp. 55-56 and V, p. 138.
[10]vide *Śrī Pañcarātra Rakṣā*, ed. by M.D. Aiyangar and T. Venugopalacharya, Madras, 1942, p. XII; *Paramasaṃhitā of the Pāñcharātra*, ed. S.K. Aiyangar, Baroda, 1940, pp. 7ff; pp. 18-19.
[11]*IHQ*, VI, 1930, pp. 315ff, pp. 437ff; VII, 1931, pp. 93ff; 343ff. and 735ff; Bhandarkar, op. cit., p. 30f; *Jayākhyasaṃhitā*, ed. E. Krishnamacharya, 1931, pp. 6ff; *Śrī Pañcarātra Rakṣā*, p. XVIII.
[12]vedaiścaturbhiḥ samitamkṛtam, *Mbh.*, XII.322.26., see also XII.322.35-38.
[13]lokatantrasya kṛtsnasya yasmād dharmam pravartate, ibid, XII.322.36; lokadharmam, anuttamam ibid, BE. ch. 335.29.
[14]Basham, *The Wonder that was India*, p. 294.

of the West developed indepedent of the orthodox culture, but both of them differed greatly in their relations with the Vedic culture. The heterodox East revolted against Vedism, but the theistic character of Bhāgavatism was congenial to the orthodox aspirations. Although some degree of tension between Vedism and Bhāgavatism cannot be ruled out,[1] the Brāhmaṇas adopted this system for revitalising the Vedic Orthodoxy which was encountering the challenges posed by heterodox sects.

The Un-Orthodox Śaivāgama

Śaivāgama was an unorthodox system of religion. Even Rudra of the Vedic texts was connected to the ascetic trend.[2] The *Mahābhārata* records traditions of earlier times when Rudra was not entertained in sacrifices.[3] The *Atharvaveda*[4] connects Rudra with the Vrātyas. The description of Rudra betrays his unorthodox character. The non-Vedic origin of Śiva is evidenced by proto-Śiva found as a deity of the Harappan culture.[5] A process must have been in progress, at least from the Upaniṣadic period, to transform Rudra-Śiva into theistic god, for we find that he is developed as a monotheistic god in the *Śvetāśvatara Upāniṣad* belonging to *circa* 4th. Century BC.

Apart from this, in our period there started movements of Āgamic Śaivism. We are told in the *Mahābhārata* that the 'Pāśupata Jñāna' was revealed by the consort of Umā, i.e., Śrīkaṇṭha (Śiva or Paśupati), the son of Brahmn.[6] V.S. Pathak holds the view that Śrīkaṇṭha founded the Pāśupata school of Śaivism 'from which, later on, several branches sprung forth. The branch started by Lakulīśa, was called Lākulīśa Pāśupata.'[7] The movement of Pāśupata Śaivism had started before the time of Lakulīśa, who flourished in the Lāṭa Country in the western part of India,[8] probably in the second Century BC.[9] The Pāśupata Śaivāgama gained importance as a separate school. It is enumerated as an independent sect, alongwith the systems of Sāṃkhya, Yoga, Pāñcarātra and Vedas.[10] Later categorization[11] of Śaivism into Vedic, Tāntric, and mixed schools implies that Lākulīśa Pāśupata was originally Āgamic and not Vedic.[12] Pāśupata school

[1] *IA*, XXXVII, pp. 251-52; Raychaudhury, *MSEVS*, p. VII.
[2] Muir, op. cit., IV, pp. 358f.
[3] ibid, IV, pp. 376-79, 385.
[4] *AV*, XV, 5.1ff; see also A.P. Karmarkar, *Religions of India* (*Vrātya or Dravidian System*) Lonavala, India, 1950, pp. 19ff, 38ff, 47ff, 55ff.
[5] Basham, op.cit., p. 23.
[6] *Mbh.*, XII.337.62.
[7] Pathak, *Śiva Cults in Northern India*, pp. 4 and 8.
[8] *JBBRAS*, XXII, pp. 151-53.
[9] Pathak, op. cit., pp. 9f.n.; Bhandarkar places the date of Lakulīśa in the second quarter of the first Century AD vide *EI*, XXI, pp. 1ff; see also Bhandarkar, op. cit., p. 116.
[10] *Mbh.*,XII.337.95.
[11] Tāntrikam vaidikam miśram tridhā pāśupatam śubham, *Kürma P.*, as quoted in *Śrīkarabhāṣya*; see also *Bhāg. P.*, XI.3.47-48.
[12] Pathak, op. cit., p. 8.

does notseem to have conformed in many points to the Varṇāśrama system.[1] Nor did it accept the authority of the Vedas as the later commentators of Uttaramīmāṃsā held[2] that Bādarāyaṇa (*c.* second century BC), refuted the *Pāśupataśāstra.*

As early as the second Century BC there developed another popular school of Śiva-Bhāgavata, which was essentially an ascetic sect, Patañjali describes its adherent as 'one who carries an iron lance, a shaft (daṇḍa) and a hide (ajina).' Patañjali, an orthodox priest, did not hold this school in good esteem because its followers were used to violence.[3] They are described as hypocrites (dāṃbhika) in later commentaries.[4] The Kāpālika school was also an early āgamic movement, mentioned contemptuously in the *Maitrāyaṇi Upaniṣad*[5] and the Lalitavistara.[6] There might have been other such schools allied with the Āgamic movement.

The orthodox tradition looks down upon these various sects and shows a general reaction against them. The tradition is recorded even in later works. *The Smṛti Candrikā* enjoins:[7] "A man should bathe with all his clothes on if he chances to touch the Bauddhas, the Pāśupatas, the Jainas, the Lokāyatikas, the Kāpālikas, and those Brāhmaṇas who have taken up the duties not meant for them. But who touches the Kāpālikas, he should perform Prāṇāyāma in addition.' Even the Puṛāṇas held them culturally apart. The Kāpālikas, Sātvatas, Bauddhas, and Jainas are described as performing fallen practices, and they are treated as religious outlaws (bahiṣkṛtāḥ).[8] Further, we find that Appaya Dīkṣita, citing many passages from the *Mahābhārata* and the Purāṇas, has refuted the view of Śrīkaṇṭha that Vedic and Āgamic traditions were the same. The Āgamic literature is characterised as pseudo-scripture (moha-śāstra),[9] a conspiracy of the grace of Śiva and Viṣṇu directed against the Vedic path.[10] These commentaries and views embodied in the later works speak of the cultural antagonism and the resentment of orthodoxy against the Āgamic religions existing in the earlier times.

Thus we find that apart from the distinct and positive challenge from Buddhism, various movements of Āgamic origin were prevalent among the masses which must have attracted, as we find in the descriptions of

[1]Varṇāśramakṛtairdharme viparītam kvacita samam, *Mbh.*, Calcutta ed., XII.285.124; cf. Yaduvanshi, *Shaivamat*, 1955, p. 153.

[2]see commentary on "patyursāmanjasyāt," *Uttaramimāṃsā Sūtra*, cf. Shahkare, *Liṇgadhāraṇacandrikā*, p. 331.

[3]Patañjali on Pāṇini, V.2.26.

[4]vide, *A Comprehensive History of India*, ed. K.A. Nilakantha Sastri, p. 397.

[5]*Mait. Up.*, VI.

[6]*Lalitavistara*, ed. by Lefmann, 1902, p. 249.

[7]*Smṛti Candrikā*, II, 310 *Śaṭtriṃśanmata.*

[8]*Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa*, III.14.37-9, as cited in Aparārka on *Yāj.*, I.103, vide, *Yājñavalkya* ed. by Hari Narayana Apte, Bombay, 1903, p.143.

[9]*Brahma Sūtra*, II.2.38. Commentaries thereunder.

[10]Abhinava Śaṅkara, Commentary on *Śatarudrīya*,, 'Patināmpataye namaḥ.'

Kali age, a large population from even the Varṇa order including a good number of Brāhmaṇas. It seems that while the priestly section of the Brāhmaṇas concerned itself with the preservation of Vedism within the upper Varṇas, especially associating themselves with the ruling class and nobility, the popular religious systems emerged as independent of them. Renou remarks: "Vedism was in the charge of a priestly élite who served a military aristocracy; it may well be that the masses were already Hindu."[1] But before the constant consistent efforts of Brāhmaṇas to lick Neo-Orthodoxy into a well-defined shape, its various constituents lay scattered as a medley of diverse elements.

[1]Renou, *Religions of Ancient India*, London, 1953, p. 6.

Chapter 3

BRĀHMAṆAS AS THEOLOGIANS (SYNTHESIZATION AND DEMOCRATIZATION OF RELIGIOUS SYSTEMS)

1. Introductory

The Epics and the Purāṇas are stated[1] as having originally contained only heroic traditions preserved for generations by the Sūtas. But in their present form they contain a good deal of material added in different periods by Brāhmaṇas. Their contents reflect the tendencies mostly of the period under our study, although they underwent further additions in later periods.[2] Brāhmaṇas as their authors appear to be theologians[3] of rare imagination, who not only clearly visualised and, at times, lamented over the decay of the orthodox religious system but responded positively to heterodox movements of sectarian character directed against Vedism.

Unfortunately so scanty are the data about the individual authors and theologians[3] and such is its mythological garb that one is deterred from conducting an enquiry into the role of individual Brāhmaṇas. Although the Brāhmaṇas as a class are declared[4] not only to be the preachers of dharma (duty) but also the refuge of the whole world, the tradition ascribing the authorship of the *Mahābhārata* and the Purāṇas to Kṛṣṇadvaipāyana Vyāsa does not help us in this matter. The ṛṣis, who are presented as holding long discussions and giving discourses on theological points, are often described as semi-divine beings.[5] The mythology seeks to connect them with celestial regions and deities. However, most of the scriptures being composed or compiled by the Brāhmaṇas themselves, we find an exceedingly enormous mass of dicta emphasizing the supreme impor-

[1]Pargiter, *AIHT*, pp. 6ff., 15ff, 24ff.

[2]Hazra, op. cit., pp. 215ff.

[3]The term theologian is obviously derived from the term theology which traces its origin in the classical Greek writings. In its narrower sense this term, as is the case with theology, came to have subsequently a strong Christian profile. We have used this term in a broader sense for those Brāhmaṇas of our times who were not only well-versed in the study of religion, i.e. god, attributes of gods, man, universe etc. but were also responsible for the formulations of various religious ideas, rituals, myths, concepts, doctrines etc.

[4]*Mbh.*, XIII.147.25.

[5]*Mbh.*, XII.318.6.

tance of the Brāhmaṇas in the religious life of the people. It is said[1] that, like fire concealed within wood, everything that is said or heard or read in this world was ensconced in the Brāhmaṇas. Upon them[2] depends the course of conduct followed by men, even as the existence of all creatures depends upon (the rain of) Vāsava (Indra). The Brāhmaṇas are declared[3] to be the great cause-ways of dharma (righteousness) in respect to all the world. They are[4] said to be agreeable to and the refuge of all the creatures in the universe. It is asserted[5] that they are the authors of all regulations which govern the world. Conversant with all the dharmas (duties), they are said[6] to be possessed of minute vision. It is held that they are the path along which all should go, for they are the guides of everyone. Again they are described[7] to be the upholders of all sacrifices and also the heavy burden of the forefathers, i.e., traditional dharma. These self-assertions apart, the role of the Brāhmaṇas[8] in the religious transformation of the period was undoubtedly of considerable significance which is best shown by the main tendencies and changes brought about in the orthodox fold to overcome the set-backs which the Vedic tradition had suffered and the measures taken by them to develop a synthetic religious system, thus, responding to the heterodox challenge. Here we undertake the study of the devices and efforts of the Brāhmaṇas towards this direction.

2. Transformation of the Vedic and non-Vedic Pantheon

The Epics, especially the *Mahābhārata*, present a large number of gods and deities, a number of sects, contradictory views, and opposing religious systems. But a closer study of these works betrays a conscious attempt on the part of the Brāhmaṇas to synthesize the diverse religious systems. In regard to the composite Bhāgavatism, a passage in the

[1] *Mbh.*, XIII.33.18.
[2] ibid, XIII.33.6.
[3] ibid, XIII.136.3-4.
[4] ibid, XIII.136.5.
[5] ibid.
[6] ibid, XIII.136.6
[7] ibid, XIII.136.8.
[8] The terms 'Brāhmaṇa' or 'Orthodox Brāhmaṇa' used by us do not necessarily connote a priestly élite of a dogmatically conservative tendency. They naturally mean those Brāhmaṇas who uphold the authority of the Vedas and emphasize the 'Varṇāśramadharma' as against the anti-Vedic cultural traditions. It also stands for those Brāhmaṇas who imbibed the Upaniṣadic trend and lived up to that within the Vedic fold.

Besides, we have used the term Neo-Orthodoxy. It signifies the composite religious system which accepts the authority of the Vedas and advocates the Vedic tradition. It means approximately the same as Epic-Purāṇic or Smārta-Paurāṇika religion which is popularly known as Hinduism from the early medieval period onwards. It is very often used in contrast to the heterodox sects.

Nārāyaṇīya section of the *Mahābhārata* makes a positive pronouncement[1] that as in the days of yore the deities and Asuras (demons) churned out nectar from the ocean, the Brāhmaṇas, uniting together, churned out the scriptures and produced this (*Nārāyaṇīya*) narrative which is like nectar. This process of synthesis is marked by the strong tendency to "vedicize" the epic deities, which in turn leads to the democratization of the Vedic gods. The Purāṇas bring about a developed form of the same movement.

The worship of the Vedic Viṣṇu as Nārāyaṇa-Kṛṣṇa-Vasudeva forms the main characteristic of the sect known as Vaiṣṇavism. In the *Mahābhārata* this system is hardly known as the Vaiṣṇava religion. It is only towards the end of the epic that we find its sectarian characteristics and denomination.[2] The attributes of Viṣṇu found in the Vedas are developed in the Epics and the Purāṇas. In the *Ṛgveda* he is described as a great giant who strode the seven regions of the earth[3] with three steps only.[4] Further he is associated with Indra[5] and has solar[6] characteristics. He is merciful and protects the people[7] and is connected with the cult of sacrifice.[8] The Brāhmaṇa theologians have introduced Viṣṇu with all these characteristics in the epics and the Purāṇas. In the *Mahābhārata* the mystic attributes of Viṣṇu is mentioned.[9] He retains his solar characteristics as he is invariably the youngest among the twelve Ādityas born of Aditi.[10] He is the only one who is eternal, invincible, imperishable, everlasting, a potent lord.[11] The same potency and eternity is attributed to him in the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*.[12] His association with sacrifice remains intact.[13] But in the *Nārāyaṇīya* section of the *Mahābhārata* the concept of Vaiṣṇavite sacrifice has undergone much change. The part played by the Brāhmaṇa theologians in the integration of the Sātvata rite with the Vaiṣṇava ritual is more than conspicuous. The offerings to and adoration of Nārāyaṇa, manes, and the Brāhmaṇas become[14] part and parcel of this composite rite. The efficacy of sacrifices conducted by the Brāhmaṇas is very much asserted.[15]

[1] *Mbh.*, XII.326.115; see also ibid, XII.322.33.
[2] *Mbh.*, BE. XVIII.6.97-98-103.
[3] *ṚV*, I.22.17.
[4] *AV*, VII.26.3; *AV*, VIII.26.4; *VSaṃ.*, V.15.17.
[5] *ṚV*, I.22.19; *AV*, VII.26.6; *VSaṃ.*, VI.4.
[6] *ṚV*, I.155.6; *Nirukta*, VII.5; *ŚBr.*, XIV.1.6; vide Muir, *OST*, IV, pp. 65-66.
[7] *ṚV*, I.22.18-19; I.154.1-2; X.19.4.
[8] *ABr.*, I.15; see also *AV*, V.26.7; *TSaṃ.*, I.7.4; *MSaṃ.*, I.4.14; *VSaṃ.*, II.25; *ŚBr.*, I.1.1.2; ibid, I.9.3.3; cf. Keith, *RPVU*, p. 111.
[9] *Mbh.*, III.13.24; Muir, *OST.*, IV., pp. 63ff.
[10] *Mbh.*, I.59.16; Muir, op. cit., IV, pp. 118-20.
[11] *Mbh.*, III, ch. 13.
[12] *Viṣ. P.*, I.15.90ff; *Bhāg. P.*, VI.6.24.
[13] *Vāyu P.*, 30.106, 107; cf. *ŚBr.*, XIX.1.1.1-5; cf. *Avimāraka*, VI.19.
[14] *Mbh.*, XII.322.19-23.
[15] *Mbh.*, XII.324.22-33; ibid, XII.324.32.

Identification of the Vedic and the Epic Deities

The Sātvata deity Vāsudeva-Kṛṣṇa was identified with Viṣṇu of Vedic origin. In a typical passage of the *Mahābhārata*,[1] which brings about the polysynthetic conception of divinity, Arjuna declares: "Thou Kṛṣṇa of the Yādava race, having become the son of Aditi, and being called Viṣṇu, the younger brother of Indra, the all-pervading, becoming child, O Vexer of thy foes, hast by thy energy traversed the sky, the atmosphere, the earth in three strides." Kṛṣṇa again is connected with sacrifice.[2] His association with the Brāhmaṇas is specially emphasized. He (Janārdana) is held[3] as friend of the Brāhmaṇas and their well-wisher. It is said that the attributes of Kṛṣṇa depicted by Bhīṣma are only those which are expounded[4] by the Brāhmaṇas and described in the Purāṇas. In the *Śānti Parva*[5] a learned Brāhmaṇa is presented as declaring that praṇava (the syllable Om), which is the mouth of all the Vedas, truth, knowledge, yajña, and the great God are the same as Vāsudeva. The knower of the Vedas call him Sanātana Puruṣa (Primeval Man) and Viṣṇu. These passages present a very typical instance of the Brāhmaṇical way of integrating the Vedic and the epic deities, transforming them to a synthetic conception of divinity. The attributes of Vedic Viṣṇu ascribed to Kṛṣṇa and his association with sacrifice seems to be a device of democratization of the Vedic Viṣṇu, bringing him down to popular epic deity. In the *Mahābhārata*[6] we come across a mass of myths and legends which show such a process of identifications of early deities, but the most significant incarnation of Viṣṇu is presented in Vāsudeva-Kṛṣṇa who has a thousand names.[7] Viṣṇu, identified with Nārāyaṇa and the epic deities, appears as an all-pervading supreme God[8] and 'Niṣṭhā'[9] (i.e., an object of worship). Thus Vāsudeva-Viṣṇu becomes the centre of the popular theistic movement and at the same time the deity 'par excellence' of the Brāhmaṇical pantheon. As early as the second Century BC the Besanagar Inscription of Heliodorus presents the Epic deity Vāsudeva as Devadeva (the god of the gods) associated with Garuḍa, the emblem and vehicle of Viṣṇu. It shows that the synthetic religious system was coming into vogue even amongst the foreigners. Bhāsa also describes Viṣṇu incarnated as Kṛṣṇa[10] and depicts the latter in the characteristic features of the former sleeping on his watery coach as consort of the goddess

[1] *Mbh.*, III.13.23-24 also 18-20.
[2] ibid, III.13.22.
[3] ibid, XII.326.120.
[4] ibid, XII.200.6-7.
[5] ibid, XII.203.8-9.
[6] vide Hopkins, *EM*, pp. 77, 189, 193ff.
[7] *Mbh.*, XIII. Ch. 135; *Vāyu P.*, Ch. 97; *Viṣ. P.*, I.2.12.
[8] *Viṣ. P.*, I.2.7.
[9] *Mbh.*, XII.337.64.
[10] *Bālacarita*, I.LL.1-2.

Śrī.[1] By the beginning of the Christian era iconic representations of Viṣṇu-Vāsudeva are found and the numismatic evidence also alludes to the prevalence of this cult.[2]

Another important deity, who emerged as the cosmic conception, was Nārāyaṇa sometimes described as a venerable ṛṣi.[3] R.G. Bhandarkar[4] interprets the cosmic character of Nārāyaṇa as the resting place or goal of Nara or a collection of Naras (men). There is a tradition which connects Nārāyaṇa with the primeval waters.[5] Again there is a myth that Brahmadeva sprang from the lotus in the navel of Nārāyaṇa or Viṣṇu (*Mbh.*, XII.337.18). Nārāyaṇa, the Cosmic Man (Puruṣa-Nārāyaṇa), the all pervading power of sacrifice, a symbol of the creation of the universe,[6] who performs a Pañcarātra Sastra and becomes supreme by the performance of the human sacrifice (puruṣamedha),[7] is identified with both Viṣṇu and Vāsudeva-Kṛṣṇa.[8] He is intimately associated with sacrifices[9] also. The passages in the *Mahābhārata* describe him to have been born from 'Ahiṃsā' (Non-violence[10]). But it is strange that a god associated with human sacrifice should be taken to have originated from Non-violence. Again, it is said that in the golden age . . . the eternal Nārāyaṇa, the soul of the universe, was born as the son of Dharma in a quadruple form, viz. Nara, Nārāyaṇa, Hari and self-created Kṛṣṇa.[11] At another place Nārāyaṇa is presented[12] as asserting that he takes incarnations in order to establish the Veda-Śruti tradition. He assumes[13] the forms of Yajña (sacrifice) and honorarium, the typical elements of Brāhmaṇic creed. Again, it is said[14] that since the Brāhmaṇas are born from the mouth of Nārāyaṇa, they are the souls of all creatures, the creators of all things, and identifiable with all existent objects.

We find two distinct forms of Nārāyaṇa, i.e., the euhemeristic form of an ancient sage[15] and that of his cosmic characteristics. Nara and Nārāyaṇa are described as the prototypes of the two demi-gods of the Bhāgavata cult, i.e., Arjuna and Vāsudeva-Kṛṣṇa respectively.[16] It seems that the con-

[1] *Avimāraka*, II.3. The date of Bhāsa may be fixed in the 2nd or 3rd Century AD.
[2] vide Goswami, *A Study of Vaiṣṇavism*, p. 9.
[3] *Mbh*, III.,13.39; ibid, BE., XII.350.4.
[4] *Vaiṣṇavism, Śaivism* etc., p. 43.
[5] *Manu*, I.10.
[6] *ŚBr.*, XII.3.4.
[7] ibid, XIII. 6.1.1.
[8] *Mbh.*, XII.200. 1-2ff; XII. Ch.330; cf. *MSaṃ.*, II.9; *AĀr.*, X.1.6; Keith, *JRAS*, 1908, p. 171f.n.
[9] *Mbh.*, XII.337.57 (tr. Dutt); XII.323.52-60.
[10] Dowson, *A Classical Dictionary of Hindu Mythology*, London, 1953, p. 220.
[11] *Mbh.*, XII.321.8-9.
[12] ibid, XII.326.94.
[13] ibid, XII.327.53-54.
[14] ibid, XII.329.13.
[15] ibid, XII.322.6.
[16] ibid, III.13.39; VI.62.11; ibid, III.45.18.

ception of Nārāyaṇa's avatāra[1] comes from his euhemeristic form, while his identity with Viṣṇu is based on his cosmic form of Supreme God. Again his euhemeristic feature resembling the characteristics of Vāsudeva-Kṛṣṇa, the preacher of Bhāgavatism, and his ritualistic conception akin to Viṣṇu, seem to have served to unite the Bhāgavata Vāsudeva-Kṛṣṇa and the Vedic Viṣṇu. As in the case of Viṣṇu, the Vedo-Brāhmaṇic character of Nārāyaṇa is developed in the epic and the Purāṇas, giving him the position of the Supreme God in the emerging Vaiṣṇava sect. Further, he is very cautiously transformed into a personal God of theistic nature.

One of the important aspects of this process of synthesis was the integration of the Ekāntika worship of Nārāyana[2] and the Sātvata[3] system of Bhāgavatism. Both of them seem to be of different origins.[4] The Ekāntika devotee gets[5] a much greater meritorious position than the Brāhmaṇas who properly study the Vedas together with the Upaniṣads, or lead the austere life of an ascetic. It appears that certain circles of the Brāhmaṇas either were opposed, or had apathy to, the Sātvata Vidhi.[6] Again, some chapters[7] of the *Mahābhārata* reveal a cryptic antagonism of the Sātvatas to puritan Vedism. Both these terms Ekāntika and the Sātvata Vidhi must have originally been of a great technical significance. Their original import is now lost to us. In the *Mahābhārata* the Ekāntika is transformed into an attribute of devotion while the 'Sātvata Vidhi' is transfused with the Vaiṣṇava doctrinal elements. According to the *Nārāyanīya* section the Sātvatas followed their typical Vidhi (rite)[8] of devotionalism. Its supreme scripture (Śāstram Uttamam) was announced unanimously by the seven ṛṣis, jointly designated a Citraśikhaṇḍis,[9] on Mount Meru, which was duly made to accord with the four Vedas[10] by integrating Pravṛtti and Nivṛtti dharmas.[11] The Ekāntika system of worship of Nārāyaṇa and Bhāgavata theism appear to have been fused in the Harigītā,[12] suggested[13] to be the present *Bhagavadgītā*. Further, the Pāñcarātra system, according to Bhandarkar,[14] evolved in *c.* 3rd Century BC, was associated

[1]*Mbh.*, I.61.90; III.84.5; VI.23.26.
[2]ibid, XII.334.1.
[3]ibid, XII.336.78(a).
[4]Hopkins, *EM*, p. 214.
[5]*Mbh.*, XII.336.5-6.
[6]ibid, XII.336.62.
[7]ibid, XII. Chs. 336-7.
[8]ibid, XII.322.19.
[9]*Mbh.*, XII.322.26 (a).
[10]ibid, BE. XII.335.28(b); 355.29(a).
[11]ibid, BE. XII.335.40(a); ibid, XII.322.37.
[12]ibid, BE. XII.346-10-11; cf. XII.348.53-55; XII.336.49-50.
[13]Hopkins, op. cit., p. 223.
[14]Bhandarkar, *Vaiṣṇavism, Śaivism* etc. p. 39; see also Schrader, *Introduction to Pañcarātra*, Madras, 1916, pp. 25-26.

with Nārāyaṇa. One of the significant doctrines of the Pāñcarātra Bhāgavata system was 'Vyuha' which finds mention in the *Brahmasūtra*.[1] But this 'Vyuha' doctrine of the Pāñcarātra Bhāgavatism, evolved around god Vāsudeva,[2] is already presented by the *Mahābhārata* as one of the tenets of Sātvata system. The Vyuha doctrine is evolved around Nārāyaṇa also. Explaining the Sātvata system[3] it is said that this system includes the acts (Dharma) that are well-performed and accomplished with a full knowledge of duties, the tenet of ahiṃsā, devotion, and Vyuha.[4] The worship of Nārāyaṇa in the forms of Aniruddha, Pradyumna, Saṅkarṣaṇa and Vāsudeva is mentioned.[5] The Brāhmaṇas are incorporated into the Vyuha doctrine on a subtle conceptual plane in a rather strange way.[6] It is said that this Dharma is directly transmitted to Nārada by Nārāyaṇa.[7] Thus the Pāñcarātra doctrine is transformed into Sātvata Dharma integrating it with the Ekāntika (monotheistic) devotionalism of Nārāyaṇa. The *Mahābhārata* records that a large number of the Brāhmaṇas were conversant with the tenets of Pāñcarātra and were performing the same. The aśvamedha sacrifice of the legendary king Uparicāravasu, who performs[8] sacrifices according to the Sātvata Vidhi (rite), is conducted by a host of Vedic priests[9] in which the divine-priest Bṛhaspati acted[10] as hotā. Again it is Bṛhaspati from whom Uparicāra learnt the Pāñcarātra doctrine propounded by the Citraśikhaṇḍin ṛṣis, most of whom bear the eponymous gotra-names of the Vedic seers.[11]

This movement of synthesis of religious systems is evidenced in Bhāsa who, depicting Nārāyaṇa's transcendental character says that the same god was Nārāyaṇa in the Kṛtayuga; he was named as Viṣṇu—the beauteous one, when he, assuming a form of golden hue, measured the triple world—in the Tretāyuga. Endowed with a body as dark as the dūrvā grass when he killed Rāvaṇa, he was called Rāma in the Dvāparayuga. And now in the Kaliyuga, with an appearance as black as Collyrium, he is known as Dāmodara.[12] It is interesting to find that Uparicāravasu, a devotee of Nārāyaṇa, is mentioned as performing orthodox Śrauta sacrifices and following the Sātvata vidhi at the same time.[13] But it is significant to note that theistic Bhāgavatism seems reluctant to accept the orthodox cult of

[1] *Brahmasūtra*, II.2.42.
[2] Bhandarkar, op. cit., pp. 38-39; *A Comprehensive History of India*, II, pp. 385ff.
[3] *Mbh.*, XII.336.51-52.
[4] ibid, XII.336.52.
[5] ibid, XII.336.53. with Nilakanta's commentary thereunder.
[6] ibid, XII.332.15-16.
[7] ibid, XII.336.12ff.
[8] ibid, XII.322.23-24.
[9] ibid,XII.323.4-9; see also XII.322.22 and 50-51.
[10] ibid, XII.323.5.
[11] ibid, XII. Ch. 322.2-7.
[12] *Bālacarita*, I.1.
[13] *Mbh.*, XII.322.17-22.

Vedic sacrifice with its dogmatic nature as it is inferior to the path of Bhakti.[1] In fact, the Epic deity Kṛṣṇa transcends the doctrine of sacrifice.[2] As regards the attributes and conceptions of Viṣṇu and Nārāyaṇa, they are sometimes described in their characteristic features of the Vedic tradition and sometimes presented as all-pervading supreme principles of Universe akin to the Upaniṣadic trend, and finally, Viṣṇu attains the status of a personal god of the epic theology having the traits of the monotheistic (Ekāntika) devotionalism. And Nārayāṇa is at times described as Mahā-yogin performing austerities [3] But the upshot of the Epic theology is clearly expressed when it is declared: "The Sāṃkhya system, the Ārāṇyaka-Veda, and the Pāñcarātra scriptures are identical and form parts of one whole," and, this is the dharma of the Ekāntins, having sole faith in Nārāyaṇa.[4] The process of this synthesis passes through a jumble of myths and legends of typical Brāhmaṇic inventions.

The worship of Rāma emerged as one of the major cults within Vaiṣṇavism much later[5] than our period of study. But Rāma-Dāśarathi[6] is frequently mentioned as the incarnation of Viṣṇu in the Epics[7] and Purāṇas.[8] His deification begins in our period and he became an important god of the Neo-Orthodoxy. Bhāsa testifies to the increasing popularity of Rāma as the incarnation of Viṣṇu.[9] Kālidāsa in his *Raghuvaṃśa* alludes to the incarnation of Rāma as Hari.[10] The Vākāṭaka queen Prabhāvatī, daughter of Candragupta II, was a devotee of Ramagirisvāmi,[11] i.e., Rāma, the lord of Ramagiri (modern Ramatek near Nagpur).

3. Emergence of Śaivism

Śaivism had come a long way of its development till in our period the Brāhmaṇas attempted to evolve a comprehensive cult of Siva, merging various non-Āryan and non-orthodox deities in him. It is interesting to note that according to the Anuśāsana Parva[12] only the learned Brāhmaṇas

[1] *Gītā*, II.42-44; II.45ff.
[2] *Mbh.*, BE. XII.47.91.
[3] *Mbh.*, XII.334.1-3; and, XII.337.17.
[4] ibid, XII.336.75-76.
[5] Bhandarkar opines: 'The cult of Rāma ..... must have come into existence about the eleventh Century, AD. vide, *Vaiṣṇavism Śaivism etc.*, p. 47.
[6] The historicity of Rāma has become more or less an established fact among scholars, vide V. Pathak, *History of Kośala*, pp. 161-64. Basham concludes that both Rāma and his father Daśaratha were 'comparatively insignificant chieftains,' vide, *The Wonder that was India*, 1954, pp. 39-40; see also Kosambi. *ISIH*, p. 118.
[7] *Mbh.*, XII.326.78(b); *Rāmāyaṇa*, Bālakāṇḍa, 17.1-2.
[8] *Mat. P.*, 48.40-48; *ERE*, VII, 193.
[9] *Bālacarita*, I.1; *Abhiṣekanāṭaka*, IV.13-14; ibid, V.15.
[10] *Raghuvaṃśa*, X.5-6.
[11] Sircar, *SI*, I, p. 415.
[12] *Mbh.*, XIII.146.21.

know all the awesome and blazing forms of Rudra in which he is worshipped in the world. It is said[1] that Śiva took many forms only as a favour to the Brāhmaṇas. His abode in the Mount Himalaya is inhabited[2] by a multitude of Brāhmaṇas engaged in the various types of self-mortifications and austerity.

The word 'Śiva' in the *Ṛgveda* was originally used in its etymological sense, i.e., auspicious, applied to the Vedic deities,[3] while Rudra was a quite developed deity described in both his terrifying and pacifying aspects.[4] From the Vedic times Rudra was intimately associated with asceticism.[5] It is suggested that some form of the Proto-Śiva cult of the Harappan culture is disparagingly referred to as 'Śiśnadevāḥ,' the followers of the Phallic cult, in the *Ṛgveda*.[6] Rudra assumes considerable importance among the Vrātyas as he is described[7] in his various aspects like Bhave, Śarva, Paśupati, Ugra, Mahādeva and Iśāna.[8] Śiva is well associated with Rudra and similarly raised to the status of the great god Mahādeva and Maheśvara in the Brāhmaṇa literature.[9] Again, a characteristic transformation of the attributes of Rudra-Śiva is found in the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* wherein the philosophical and theistic concept of Rudra-Śiva is evolved.[10] The character of Rudra-Śiva, however, remained dominantly unorthodox to the extent that he was associated with ascetic traditions in opposition to the cult of sacrifice. But this proved advantageous to the orthodox theologians in integrating various unorthodox cults and schools within Śaiva sect which held together non-orthodox Āgamic sects like, Pāśupata, Śiva-Bhāgavata, Kāpālika, etc., despite doctrinal divergencies. When it comes to declaring the greatness of Rudra-Śiva the authority of the Vedas, ṛṣis, and Brāhmaṇas is cited.[11]

Liṅga Worship and Śaivism

The phallus worship was essentially a non-Āryan popular cult of fertility since very early times as evidenced by some seals[12] from Mohenjo-daro and Harappa and referred to in the *Ṛgveda*.[13] But, by the beginning of our period, Liṅga worship becomes associated with Śiva and was raised to

[1] *Mbh.*, XIII. Ch.14.
[2] ibid, XIII.14.56 and XIII. Ch.14.
[3] *ṚV*, X.92.9.
[4] *TSaṃ.*, IV.5.1; *VSaṃ.*, Ch.16.
[5] *Muir, OST*, IV, pp. 358ff.
[6] *A Comprehensive History of India*, II, p. 402.
[7] *AV*, XV.1.1ff; XV.2.1.ff; XV.5.1ff.
[8] *AV*, IV.28.1-7; VI.93.2.
[9] *ŚBr.*, VI.1.3.11-16; *KBr.*, VI.1-9.
[10] *Śvet. Up.*, Ch. III; *Atharvaśiras Up.*, vide, *Concordance to the Principal Upanishads* by Jacob, 1963, pp. 792-93.
[11] *Mbh.*, XIII.146.24.
[12] Marshall, *Mohenjo-daro and the Indus Civilization*, I, 5.
[13] *ṚV*, VII.21.5; X.99.3; vide, *Ved. Ind.*, II, p. 382.

considerable importance in the Epic-Purāṇic theology. Its prevalence is evidenced by various archaeological finds of this period.[1] The *Mahābhārata* mentions Śiva in many forms[2] and names like Bhava, Sthāṇu, Rudra, and Vṛṣabhadhvaja. Bhava aspect involved his worship in Liṅga form.[3] It is said that his phallic form is ever present in the observance of the Brahmacarya vow and, as it adds to the glory of the world, he is called Maheśvara.[4] Further, as he is Great and Ancient and is the founder of life, and the cause of its continuance, and as his Phallic form is eternal, he is called 'Sthāṇu.'[5] In the *Śiva Purāṇa* Śiva himself is made to declare that he has appeared in the Liṅga form.[6] His greatness over Brahmā and Viṣṇu is established.[7] Though, the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad*[8] describes Rudra as lord of 'Yoni' it is only in the *Mahābhārata* and the Purāṇas that the association of Liṅga worship with Śiva was greatly developed. The Phallic cult assumed a form of movement which shows that the Brāhmaṇic fold, overtaken by revolutionary changes, sought to democratize Rudra-Śiva by identifying him with popular forms of worship. This brought a large number of new people to the fold of orthodoxy and was naturally meant to encounter the Buddhist challenge.

Assimilation of other Cults into Śaivism

The cult of Kārttikeya, prevalent among the Yaudheyas, a republican Kṣatriya tribe of Haryana was another one to be integrated into Śaiva worship in our period. The coins[9] of Yaudheyas belonging to *Circa* 1st. century BC or 1st Century AD bear a six-headed figure of Brahmaṇyadeva, i.e., Kārttikeya. In the *Mahābhārata* the chief towns of the Yaudheyas are described as Mattamāyūrakas, i.e., abodes of Kārttikeya.[10] The worship of Kārttikeya (born from Kṛttikās) seems to have been prevalent in various warring tribes of the early Christian centuries, as Kārttikeya or Skanda is the god of warriors and the chief of the army of gods. In the *Bhagavadgītā* Kṛṣṇa is presented to have declared that among the generals he was Skanda.[11] This god was known by different names like

[1]Rao, Gopinath, *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, II, pt. I, pp. 65-68; Coomaraswamy, *HIIA*, London, 1927, p. 39; J.N. Banerjea, *DHI*, p. 457; *AIU*, p. 460; Banerjee, *DHI*, pp. 113, 167-8, Pl.1, Fig. g, 10, 13-14; V.S. Agrawala, "A Catalogue of the Brahmanical Images in Mathura Art," vide *JUPHS*, XXII, 1949, p. 128; Banerjea, *DHI*, pp. 181-82; Allan, *BMCCAI*, Pl.15, nos. 1-10; *Pratijñā*, III.LL.9-10, and V.I; *Meghadūta* of Kālidāsa (Pūrvamegha), 36-37; *EI*, XXI, p. 9.

[2]*Mbh.*, VII.172.86-90.

[3]*Mbh.*,VII.172.87(a).

[4]*Mbh.*, VII.173.83.(tr. Dutt, VII.203.122).

[5]ibid, VII.173.92 (tr. Dutt, VII.203.131).

[6]*Śiva Purāṇa*, 9.18.

[7]*Vāyu P.*, 55.18; *Mat. P.*, 188.57; *Bḍ. P.*, II.26.21.

[8]*Śvet.Up.*, 4, 11; 5, 2.

[9]*A Comprehensive History of India*, II, p. 406.

[10]*Mbh.*, II.29.4(a), 5(b); vide *A Comprehensive History of India*, II, p. 406.

[11]*Gītā*, X.24.

Kumāra, Viśākha, Skanda, and Mahāsena. His name 'Brahmaṇyadeva' would mean 'the deity friendly or favourable to the Brāhmaṇas.' One of his titles is 'Brāhmaṇapriya,' i.e., he is 'fond of the Brāhmaṇas.'[1] His worship is evidenced by the *Mahābhāṣya*[2] of Patañjali and the coins of Huviṣka.[3] The rudimentary conception of Kārttikeya may be traceable in the early Vedic literature but, as god of the powerful tribes of our times, he emerged as a deity of considerable importance only in our period and was finally incorporated in Śaivism, being related as the son to Śiva (Rudra).[4]

The cult of Gaṇeśa also was assimilated within the Śaiva sect. In the Ṛgvedic hymns the mention of Gaṇapati has been made.[5] In the *Śukla Yajurveda* the hymn 'Gaṇānāntvā' etc. is connected with the Aśvamedha sacrifice.[6] The commentators Uvaṭa and Mahīdhara interpret[7] him to be the maintainer of womenfolk, of the beloveds and the source of all happiness. But the earlier texts do not depict[8] him to be the typical elephant-headed deity in human form who in our period came to be connected with Śiva as his offspring.[9]

Nāga worship was prevalent in many parts of the country in various tribes. The Nāgas, in particular, were predominantly non-Āryans with whom the serpent worship was intimately associated. The process of assimilation of serpent worship within the orthodox cult of sacrifice seems to have started much earlier as in the *Taittirīya Saṃhitā* special offerings made to the serpent as the guardian deity of the sacred fire are referred to.[10] The aboriginal cult of Nāga worship later on merged into Vaiṣṇavism, Śeṣa Nāga being associated with Viṣṇu or Kṛṣṇa.[11] The liberal and versatile, personality of Śiva seems to have been suited most to this cult. The *Harivaṃśa Purāṇa* describes the Nāga as being born of Śiva.[12] In the *Mahābhārata* Śiva is said to have made Nagendra Śeṣa as the axis of his

[1] *Mbh.*, XIII.86.18.

[2] Patañjali on Pāṇini's. VI.2.26.; Kielhorn, III, p. 148.

[3] Gardner, *Hand Book of Greek Sculpture*, p. 138, Pl. XXVI, Fig. 16; p. 146, Pl. XXVIII, Figs. 22 and 23; p. 150, Pl. XXVII. Fig. 24; Banerjea, *DHI*, Pl. X. Figs. 6, 7 and 9.

[4] *Mbh.*, III.218.30(b); see also III.218.28-30; XII.37.12; *Rāmāyaṇa*, I.36.16ff.

[5] *ṚV*, II.23.1.

[6] *VSaṃ.*, 23.30; and 23.10.

[7] On *VSaṃ.*, 23.19.

[8] See also Debiprasad Chattopadhyaya, *Lokāyata, A Study in Ancient Indian materialism*, 1959, pp. 129ff, 134ff, 139ff.

[9] *Mat. P.*, 154.502-5; *Varāha P.*, 32.7; *Bṛ. Vai. P.*, III, Chs.1-9; vide also Banerjea, *DHI*, 1941, pp. 35ff.

[10] *TSaṃ.*, V.5.10; cf. *MSaṃ* , II.7.cf. *AV*, V.65; III.15.

[11] *Mbh.*, III.194.9f; *Vis. P.*, III.2.50; V.23.1; *Bhāg. P.*, X.2.5; Fergusson, *Tree and Serpent Worship*, p. 61; Vogel, *Indian Serpent-Lore*, 1925, pp. 2-6; J.N. Banerjea, op. cit , pp. 113, 388; vide also, *Viṣ.P.*, 1.9.77 and 84, Ch. V; *Bhāg. P.*, 24.31; X. Ch.17.

[12] *HV. P.*, II. Ch.124.

chariot.[1]

Śākta Cult and Śaivism

In the Vedas we find two famous deities Uṣā (Dawn) and Vāk (Speech) and scholars have tried to explain some terra-cotta figurines of Harappā as suggestive of the existence of the cult of the Mother Goddess.[2] But the emergence of the cult is fully clear only in our period. The earlier references to female deities are not distinct. The *Vājasaneyi Saṃhitā*[3] introduces Ambikā as the sister of Rudra. So does the *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa*.[4] It is only in the *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka* that she is described as the consort of Rudra.[5] In the *Kena Upaniṣad* Umā is held as the daughter of Himalaya.[6] But in the *Mahābhārata* she is raised to considerable importance. She is described as the consort of Śiva and in her various manifestations is known as Durgā, Kālī, Umā, Śākambharī; Sarasvatī, Śavitrī etc.[7] The cult of Kārttikeya is associated with Śiva through her as she is the mother of Skanda.[8] In the Purāṇas, she is associated not only with Rudra-Śiva,[9] but also with Brahmā[10] and Viṣṇu.[11] Some of the coins of Huviṣka bear the figure of Śiva with his consort Umā described as 'Ommo.'[12] In the later times when the Tāntrika cult developed, the worship of this goddess became associated with flesh and wine.[13]

4. Sun Worship

The Sun was one of the important deities of the Vedic Āryans, whose favour was sought by the people.[14] A developed form of Sun worship is mentioned in the *Kauṣītakī Brāhmaṇa Upaniṣad*.[15] In the Vedic literature he is very often identified with Savitṛ or Āditya and in the Upaniṣad he is identified with Brahma.[16] He is mentioned in the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the Purāṇas as the son of Kaśyapa and Aditi but again in the *Rāmāyaṇa* he is held as

[1] *Mbh.*, BE. VII.203.72; ibid, VII.202.73.
[2] Karmakar, *Religions of India*, pp. 97, 99.
[3] *VSaṃ.*, III.57.
[4] *TBr.*, I.6.10.4-5; cf. *ŚBr.*, II.6.29.
[5] *TĀr.*, X.18.
[6] *Kena Up.*, III.25.
[7] *Mbh.*, BE.VI.23.2-12.
[8] *Mbh.*, XIII.127.37-38; ibid, BE.VI.23.11(b); *Rāmāyaṇa*, VI.60.11.
[9] *Vāyu P.*, 9.81; *Mat. P.*, 179.82.
[10] *Bḍ. P.*, 4.30.19.
[11] *Viṣ. P.*, 5.1.70-81.
[12] *JRAS*, 1897, p. 324.
[13] *Viṣ.P.*, V.1.185; see also *Bḍ. P.*, 4.7.76; 33.4; *Mat. P.*, 62.19; *Mbh.*, BE. IV.6.17.
[14] *ṚV*, VII.60; VII.62.2.
[15] *KBr. Up.*, 11.7.
[16] *Ch. Up.*, III.12.7; *Bṛ. Up.*, V. *Brāhmaṇas*, 14-15; *Ch. Up.*, III.12 and III.11.

a son of Brahmā.[1] He is also associated with Rudra[2] and Viṣṇu.[3] The most important Sāvitrī or Gāyatrī hymn of the twice-borns is meant to invoke the favour of this god.[4]

Sun-worship in our period developed into an image worship with the consequence that temples of the Sun came to be built. But the most important phenomenon connected with this development from our point of view was the incoming of foreign priests who became a separate sub-caste of the Brāhmaṇas in later times. The *Bhaviṣya Purāṇa* narrates that Sāmba, who was the son of Kṛṣṇa from Jāmbavatī, built a Sun temple on the bank of the river Candrabhāgā, modern Chenab, but no native Brāhmaṇa agreed to discharge priestly duties in this temple. On the advice of Gauramukha, the priest of Udayana, he went to Śakadvīpa to bring the Magas, who were special priests to Sun god. Regarding the origin of the Magas, the Purāṇa says that the sage Sujihva of Mihira Gotra had a daughter named Nikṣubhā with whom the Sun fell in love. The son born from their union was known as Jaraśabda or Jaraśāstra and he was the progenitor of the Magas. Sāmba brought some of these very Magas from Śakadvīpa and assigned them priestly function in the temple constructed by him.[5] The Purāṇic Magas were no other than the Magi priests of Persia and Jaraśāstra or Jaraśabda would be the Sanskritic reproductions of Zoroaster of the *Avesta*. Mihira is also a sanskritised form of Persian Mihr.[6]

A passage in the *Mahābhārata*, held as interpolated,[7] refers to the Magas while it describes Śakadvīpa.[8] Further, Varāhamihira, the famous astronomer of *c*. 505 AD who in all probability, as his name betrays, was a Maga Brāhmaṇa, lays down that the installation and consecration of Sun temples is to be done by the Magas who are proper persons for the purpose.[9] He asserts that they were specially qualified for, and attached to, the iconic worship of the Sun. He also lays down the attributes of the image of the Sun.[10] An inscription found at Govindapur in the Gaya district of the Śaka era 1059 (1137-38 AD) describes Magas as the Brāhmaṇas of Śakadvīpa and closely supports the tradition of their origin and coming to India as given in the Bhaviṣya Purāṇa.[11] Further, the Ghatiyātra

[1] *A Classical Dictionary of Hindu Mythology*, etc., London, 1961, pp. 310ff.

[2] Muir, op. cit., V, pp. 156ff; pp. 163ff.

[3] Bhāsa's *Avimāraka*, II.V.12, *Abhiṣeka*, VI.30.

[4] *ĀŚV. Gṛ.Sūt*. I.20.6; III.7.4-6; *Manu*, II.76-77, 85-87; cf. Wilson's *Ṛgveda*, II, p. 110; *ṚV*, III.57.10.

[5] *Bhav. P.*, 1. Ch. 139; Albirūnī seems to have identified this temple, see Sachau *Alberūnī's India*, II, p. 110.

[6] *IA*, 1911, p. 17.

[7] *IA*, 1911, pp. 17-18.

[8] *Mbh.*, VI.12.26ff.

[9] *Vṛhatsaṃhitā*, Ch. LX.V.19.

[10] ibid, Ch. LX.

[11] vide *IA*, 1911, p. 17.

Inscription of Kakkuka belonging to the 9th Century AD was composed by a Maga Brāhmaṇa named Mātṛravi. Alberūnī also testifies to their existence in India.[1]

The Maga priests, though merged in the indigenous population, were traditionally held as an outlandish element. This fact must have given rise to the question of their social status especially in relation to the indigenous priestly class of the Brāhmaṇas. An inscription of the sixth Century AD found from Nepal shows that the long process of assimilation of these elements in the orthodox fold was already complete, as it is said therein that 'magas and Brāhmaṇas would be regarded as of the same status.'[2]

These evidences unmistakably establish the fact that Maga Brāhmaṇas were originally the Magi priests of ancient Persia. They are connected with Śakadvīpa, perhaps only because it was traditionally believed to be the place from where foreign elements used to come to India.[3] They might have come alongwith the Kuṣāṇa kings, most probably with Kaniṣka (*c.* 78 AD) who was a ruler noted to have patronised the Avestan faith in India. The coins of Kaniṣka bear a figure with the name Miiro=Mihira (Sun) by its side.[4]

Thus it is interesting to find that the orthodox fold, especially the Brāhmaṇas, got a fresh recruitment of outlandish priestly elements in our period.

5. Demi-Gods and the Orthodox Fold

The people outside the orthodox fold had their own beliefs and popular deities and spirits whose favours were desired through worship. By the time of the *Atharva Veda* and the Gṛhyasūtras, greater cultural contact between the Vedic and non-Vedic peoples is marked with the result that popular deities or demi-gods like Nāgas, together with Gandharvas, Apsarās, and Yakṣas appear within the orthodox fold.[5] Viśvavasu, a Gandharva king is presented in the Śānti Parva as inquisitive about the ways of doing good to the Brāhmaṇas.[6] Pātañjali refers[7] to images and temples of Vaiśravaṇa, i.e., Dhanapati Kubera, who is regarded as the lord of Yakṣas. The worship of these non-orthodox deities was accepted in Neo-Orthodoxy by way of associating them with sectarian gods like Śiva[8] and

[1]Sachau, op. cit., I, p. 21.

[2]*Proceedings of the Bengal Asiatic Society*, 1902, p. 3.

[3]Bhandarkar, *Vaiṣṇavism, Śaivism* etc., p. 154.

[4]ibid, p. 154; Bhandarkar, vide *IA*, 1911, p. 18.

[5]*AV*, III.15; V.56; cf. *SBE*, XLII, pp. 140 and 349; XXXII, pp. 186, 197. Refer in this connection to N.J. Shende, *The Foundations of the Atharvanic Religion*, Introduction; *Śākh. Gṛ. Sūtra*, vide *SBE*, XXIX, IV.9.3; IV.1-18; *Āśva. Gṛ. Sūtra*, vide *SBE*, XXIX.111.4.1; Fausböll, *Indian Mythology*, London, 1902, pp. 28f, 123f, 170f, 180f, 181f.

[6]*Mbh.*, XII.306.26-27.

[7]Pātañjala *Mahābhāṣya* on Pāṇini, II.2.34.

[8]*Mbh.*, IX.46.25.

Kṛṣṇa,[1] whose popularity is fully attested by Bhāsa who mentions Yakṣas together with Vidyādharas and Kinnaras etc., as demi-gods,[2] as also by the epic and the Purāṇas.[3] Though at times the Yakṣiṇī seems to be represented as evil spirit,[4] the wide sway of Yakṣa worship is proved by the large number of the images of Yakṣa and Yakṣiṇī found mostly of Maurya and the Śuṅga period.[5] The worship of these demi-gods gave way to the steady emergence of the sectarian gods of Neo-Orthodoxy.[6]

6. Theism as the Basis of Synthesis

The theistic element in the worship of Bhāgavata deities and, to some degree, the theistic conception of Rudra-Śiva conform more with the orthodox Vedic tradition in contrast to the heterodox sects sprung up in the eastern region.

From the *Ṛgveda* itself elements of devotion can be traced out. Therein we meet the poets making fervent appeals to deities with whom personal relationship on emotional ground is sought to be established.[7] The Vedic hymns betray the presence of the theistic ideas.[8] The Upaniṣads are also replete with the cardinal principles of Bhakti. The attainment of god is possible through his mercy[9] and Upāsanā to him,[10] as also by efficacy of devotion to him in the field of knowledge.[11] With this background of theistic trend, the Brāhmaṇa theologians representing Vedic orthodoxy found it easier to absorb the epic cults, though these popular worships had little concern with the Vedic cult of sacrifice and ceremonialism.

The identifications of the Vedic and epic deities and the attempt at synthesizing the two religious systems are associated with the Bhakti oriented cultural trend which was carefully developed by the theologians of our time. The Epics, especially the *Bhagavadgītā*, the Purāṇas, and other theistic works are as much the products of that trend as they represent the same. The doctrine of neo-theism amounts to obtaining the grace of god by establishing emotional communion with him through complete surrender or refuge unto the divinity, having the highest degree of devotional love towards him. It is said that by the concentration of mind and intellect on

[1] *Bhāg. P.*, X.65.45; X.66.4-21; *Mbh.*, XIV.65.11; III. 83.23; III.84.85.

[2] *Dūtavākya*, I.54 etc.

[3] *Mbh.*, IX.46.26; *Bhāg. P.*, X.9.22.

[4] Jayaswal, vide, *JASB*, 1913, p. 262 *JDL*, XII, 1929, p. 30.

[5] Coomaraswamy, *Yakṣas*, Pt. I, pp. 17ff; cf. vide *Saundarānanda*, I.48; IV.10; X.13; *Mahāvastu*, I, p. 81; II, p. 105; III, p. 60; *Abhiṣeka*, VI, V.32; cf. Banerjea, op. cit., pp. 352-53; vide, also *Mbh.*, BE. XII.322.59.

[6] Basham, *The Wonder That was India*, p. 317.

[7] *ṚV*, X.7.3; *AV*, VI.79.3.

[8] Belvalkar and Ranade, *History of Indian Philosophy*, II, p. 409.

[9] *Śvet. Up.*, I.6.

[10] *Muṇḍa. Up.*, 2.2.3.

[11] *Śvet. Up.*, VI.23; II.7.

him the devotee would dwell in him.[1] It is emphasized that the attainment of devotion is superior to that of knowledge.[2] The refuge in god eradicates Māyā (illusion) from the devotee.[3] Theism advocates the doctrine of grace. Only he can see him to whom Nārāyaṇa becomes gracious.[4] The ultimate liberation depends upon his grace.[5] Kṛṣṇa declares to Arjuna: 'Give up all religious paths and take refuge in me alone. I shall absolve thee of all sins; grieve not.'[6] The *Śāṇḍilya Sūtra*[7] defines it as attachment (rāga) to god with love (rasa). The *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* would have the devotee saying "Lord, whatever thousands of forms I assume in the cycle of transmigration, may I always have unflinching devotion to thee, O the Immutable."[8] Bhakti transcends other values like 'dharma,' 'artha,' and 'kāma' because unshakable devotion to the god brings liberation in the hand of the devotee.[9]

Thus, we find that theistic ideas of the Vedas and, especially, the Upaniṣads were evolved as a basis of the sectarian worship in the Epic-Purāṇic theology. In speculative matters, the Brāhmaṇa thinkers have shown quite liberal and elastic tendencies in coping with the transforming society, as is evidenced by the Upaniṣadic fermentation. Although some sort of devotional practices must have been existing among the masses including the tribals also from time immemorial, it can well be assumed that Śraddhā and Upāsanā (worship),[10] the two cardinal tenets of theism, first developed in the Upaniṣads, must have filtered down to the masses of the non-orthodox circle and formed the basis of their system of worship, before the Brāhmaṇic theologians, under the exigencies of historical situation, made a conscious effort to evolve a popular theism synthesizing the Vedic and non-orthodox trends. It is to be noted that Bhakti in the *Mahābhārata* is thoroughly monotheistic and theoretically different from Vedic pantheism and polytheism. Regarding the development of theism Macnicol observes:[11] "There is continuity throughout, no doubt, but it is the loosely articulated continuity furnished by the history of varied peoples, commingling, interacting, but never fused by any single powerful influence into one vital and coherent whole." But in spite of the lack of perfect coherence, theism, in our period and increasingly so in later times, was powerful enough to serve as a vehicle of synthesis of the various religious trends and to fuse them together. It is reflected in a passage of the *Mahābhārata*:[12]

[1]*Gītā*, XII.8.
[2]*Mbh.*, BE. XII.343.64-65; ibid, XII.331.50-51.
[3]*Gītā*, VII.14.
[4]*Mbh.*, BE. XII.336.20(a); ibid, XII.323.18(b).
[5]ibid, XII.336.64-5(b); see also BE. XII.338.73; and XII.338.75.
[6]*Gītā*, XVIII. 66.
[7]*Śāṇḍ. Sūt.*, 6.
[8]*Viṣ. P.*, I.20; 18, 27.
[9]ibid.
[10]*The Principal Upaniṣads*, ed. Radhakrishnan, London, 1953, pp. 132-33, 135, 137-38.
[11]Macnicol, *Indian Theism*, p. 190.
[12]*Mbh.*, XII.326.75-6.

"The Sāṃkhya system, the Āraṇyaka-Veda, and the Pāñcarātra scriptures, are all identical and form part of one whole. This is the religion of those who are devoted whole-mindedly to Nārāyaṇa—the religion that has Nārāyaṇa for its soul."

7. Theism as a Movement of Doctrinal Syncretism

The movement of theism was successfully channellized as a bond of syncretism of various doctrines. It was given such liberal characteristics that even the heterodox doctrines could not remain outside its pale. It is strange that the Sāṃkhya, essentially a heterodox doctrine, which might have formed the background of early Buddhism[1] and Jainism, was also a fundamental basis of the Epic theology. But Sāṃkhya of the Epic is duly theisized, bringing it closer to Yoga.[2] The worship of fire, Brāhmaṇas, and god becomes a part of Yoga practice as preached in the great Epic.[3] Sāṃkhya was essentially in its original form a doctrine of knowledge and free from the belief in the Supreme God.[4] According to the Sāṃkhya standpoint, the only knower of Brahman is the Brāhmaṇa.[5] This atheistic Sāṃkhya, based on the theory of causation, was transformed into a theistic doctrine by adding the twenty-fifth element (*Guṇa*), i.e., Īśvara to it.[6] This was further devotionalised by associating the more orthodox doctrine of Yoga with it. With these theistic elements the Sāṃkhya of the *Mahābhārata* is distinguished from that of the Āgamic one which finds its systematized form in the Sāṃkhya-Kārikā of Īśvara-Kṛṣṇa (*c.* 4th. Century AD). Further, in place of Kapila, the traditional expounder of the classical Sāṃkhya doctrine, its origin is ascribed to Pañcaśikha in the epic.[7] It is an interesting dictum that men failing to acquire the complete knowledge of Sāṃkhya go to heaven but with the lapse of their merit they are born again as Brāhmaṇas.[8] Besides, the conception of integral Nārāyaṇa is also worthy of note. It is said that the Supreme Deity, endowed with every prosperity, is a receptacle of the Vedas and of penance also. The puissant Hari is Yogi. He is the embodiment of Sāṃkhya Philosophy, and the foremost Brahma.[9] Both Sāṃkhya and Yoga have Nārāyaṇa as their soul. He as Puruṣa[10] is the cause of everything. Numerous Śaiva sects were asso-

[1]vide Rhys Davids, *The History and Literature of Buddhism*, 5th. ed., Calcutta, 1962, pp. 16-17.

[2]*Gītā*, II.39.

[3]*Mbh.*, XII.232.8f; ibid, XII, Ch. 232.

[4]Sengupta, *Evolution of the Sāṃkhya School of Thought*, p. 46.

[5]*Mbh.*, XII.237.22.

[6]Sengupta, op. cit., p. 72; see also Schrader, op. cit., pp. 68-69.

[7]Chakravarti, *Origin and Development of the Sāṃkhya System of Thought*, 1951, pp. 42-43.

[8]*Mbh.*, XII.290.106-107; ibid, BE.XII.301.109-11.

[9]ibid, XII.335.74.

[10]ibid, XII.336.81-2.

ciated with this school.[1] Śiva himself is often described as the lord[2] of the Yogīs.

The formative stage of a composite religious system must have required a synthesis of different paths of god-realization for which the prevalent spirit of theism proved to be most suitable. The earliest and best spirit of syncretism is found in the *Bhagavadgītā*. Lord Kṛṣṇa says that intelligence is his form.[3] But it is held that by the means of Bhakti a devotee attains God.[4] It is said that Bhakti is based on meditation and knowledge of God.[5] Yoga means the suppression of passion and control of senses in order to concentrate the mind on God.[6] It is said that he who does his duty without expecting the fruit of action, is a Saṃnyāsī and Yogī both, and not those who merely renounce the sacred fire and action.[7] Such a type of Yogīs distinguished and held superior to ascetics, the knowers of the sacred lore, and the motivated performers of action.[8] But even among all Yogīs, he who devoutly worships Kṛṣṇa with a concentrated mind is considered to be the best Yogī.[9] Recitation (of Gāyatri) which is a typical practice of Bhakti creed is assimilated with the path of renunciation.[10] The story of a Brāhmaṇa of Kauśika gotra is illustrated[11] in order to emphasize the efficacy of recitation (*Japa*) and its integration into Yoga and renunciation.

The doctrine of personal communion with god on an emotional plane envisaged in Yoga and Bhakti seems to run counter to the spirit of collective action of sacrifice and ritualism. Nevertheless the materialistic sacrifice is substituted with concrete religious experience in Bhakti. Yoga transformed as a mechanism of Bhakti integrates diverse traditions of religious practices. The baroque and non-systematic Yoga of the primitive people which was 'hardly separated from their psychological substratum' offered[12] a 'mystical experience to the masses. This primitive yoga integrated in itself the magical propensities also.[13] The resurgence of Yoga in the Vedic fold, no doubt, owes much to the non-Vedic religious practices. But it helped the theologians in assimilating the popular religions within Neo-Orthodoxy. On the other hand, Yoga very well suited the ascetic traditions of the Vedic fold and was no less congenial to the 'symbolism of the Brāh-

[1]*Brahma Sūtra*, II.2.37; *Vāyu P.*, 30.293-96.
[2]*Mbh.*, XII.274.31; see also ibid, BE. 284.87ff.
[3]*Gītā*, VII.10.
[4]*Gītā*, VIII.22; also, IX.34.
[5]*Bhāg. P.*, II.2.34; II.2.31-32.
[6]*Gītā*, VI.35-37.
[7]ibid, VI.1.
[8]ibid, VI.46.
[9]ibid, VI.47.
[10]*Mbh.*, XII, Chs. 192-93.
[11]ibid, XII, 193.29-30.
[12]Eliade, *Yoga: Immortality and Freedom*, 1958, p. 144.
[13]Hauer, *Die Anfänge der Yogapraxis*, pp. 98f; Eliade, op. cit., 150.

maṇas especially the speculations justifying the interiorization of sacrifice'[1] This integrated Yoga[2] in Neo-Orthodoxy is a completely metamorphosed tenet of Bhakti which brings about a subtle 'rapprochement' between Sāṃkhya (world-renouncing trend) and the world-affirming doctrine of action by preaching the desirability of action[3] without attachment to its fruit.

Bhakti, being a positive tenet of Neo-Orthodoxy, must accord with the doctrine of action. Throughout our period the movement of asceticism was making enormous headway. The doctrine of renunciation and the ideal of monkish life were essentially disruptive of the institution of family. The dire struggle between Buddhism and orthodoxy for supremacy in society was an important phenomenon of our age. As a positive response against the Buddhist challenge, the Brāhmaṇa theologians channelized the Bhakti movement to assert the doctrine of action and the ideal of the four āśrama system.

The path of active Bhakti was the easiest and the most fitting to the householders' responsibilities. It is said[4] that the gṛhastha stage of life yields full merit of Dharma to a man as he fulfills all the duties obligatory[5] to him. The cardinal idea of the *Bhagavadgītā* also is the doctrine of action, the performance of worldly duties,[6] certainly without the desire of their fruits,[7] surrendering the same to God.[8] Performance of all worldly duties in respective stations of peoples' lives, particularly those required to maintain and hold the society and to continue the progeny, receives the greatest emphasis in all the important works of the age.[9] These responsibilities together with one's 'Svadharma' were made compatible with the path of Bhakti. This clearly shows that the authors of this age had made a conscious effort to disapprove of asceticism in favour of devotionalism which was capable enough to yield desired merits in the householders' way of life and lead to the final salvation. The same ideal is forcefully put forward by the Dharmaśāstras also.

Besides, in patterning the political and social attitude of the individual, Bhakti is made to play a subtle role of reifying the cultural ideologies. Bhakti developed as the most sublime form of surrender. But the surrender of fruit of action in the spiritual framework[10] seems to have been made prone to its temporal adaptation in the surrender of son to his father or

[1]Eliade, op. cit., 150.
[2]*Gītā*, V.4-5.
[3]ibid, II.47.
[4]*Mār. P.*, 95.4.
[5]*Mbh.*, XII.284.36-9; *Manu*, III.77-8.
[6]*Gītā*, II.3; see also, 33, 38, 47.48; III.5.9.14-16.
[7]*Gītā*, II.47.
[8]ibid, IX.27; see also *Bhāg. P.*, IV.29.49ff; XI.2.22.
[9]*Bhāg.P.*, VII.15.67; *Gītā*, XVIII.11; III.15 and 35; *Bhāg. P.*, II.17.12.
[10]*Gītā*, IX.27.

of subject to his master.[1] The polysymbolic devices, for example, making out father as Brahmā, Fire, and Veda,[2] and the king's equation with Viṣṇu[3] prepares the way for the operation of Bhakti mechanics. It was interesting to note that before the god all the devotees stand equal in status but Bhakti is made to suit a hierarchical social order as Nārāyaṇa grants different boons[4] to different Varṇas corresponding to their social positions. The idea of equality of individual before god is nicely co-ordinated with the functioning of the traditional class structure. This function of Bhakti must have served the Brāhmaṇas as an effective tool also, in changing the stubborn attitude of the tribals against social transformations which disturbed their age-old traditions and ideas. Bhakti, although quite useful to élite to patronise, as a doctrine of total surrender could have little appeal to them for their salvation was possible through knowledge or sacrifice.

The synthesis of the paths of knowledge, action, Yoga, and even renunciation through Bhakti may seem to lack consistency[5] but this syncretism, dominated by theism, had its own intrinsic merits. The ideal of refuge in god and establishing personal relationship on emotional basis with him would certainly offer solace to the trouble-stricken people. The mercy of god was a ray of hope to them against dark clouds of pessimism in the Kali age. Bhakti, being the easiest means of god-realization, was proclaimed to be the best path in comparison to those of knowledge, Yoga, action,[6] Sāṃkhya, Vedānta, penance, and renunciation. The paths of knowledge and action, being motivated by egoism and pride, fail to procure the compassion of God.[7] Even little effort, like reciting prayers to Keśava, yields great merit in Kali.[8] Further, the orthodox Varṇa Dharma is sought to be re-established through Bhakti. It is said that the merit attained by other people by difficult means of penance and other expensive ways is gained by the Śūdra only by serving the upper classes.[9] Women get the same by irrevocable devotion and dedicated service to their husbands.[10] An attempt to emphasise the family morals is obvious. These measures were the ingenius devices of the Brāhmaṇas directed to control the deviant behaviour of women and the Śūdras.

[1]*Gītā*, IX.17.
[2]*Viṣ. Sm.*, XXXI.7.
[3]*Mbh.*, BE. XII.59.112.
[4]*Mbh.*, XII.327.102-5.
[5]Eliot, *Hinduism and Buddhism*, II, p. 167.
[6]*Bhāg. P.* XI.14.20.
[7]*Śāṇḍ. Sūt.*, 22-23.
[8]*Viṣ. P.*, VI.1.60 (a); VI.2.17.
[9]ibid, VI.2.23.
[10]*Viṣ. P.*, VI.2.28.

8. The Theory of Incarnation

The development of the theory of incarnation of Viṣṇu is quite significant in our age. There are, no doubt, Vedic passages which give a rudimentary idea of incarnation. The *Ṛgveda* mentions the mystic three steps of Viṣṇu taken in favour of men in distress.[1] The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* alludes to the Avatāras of the dwarf (*Vāmana*), the fish (*matsya*), and the tortoise (*kūrma*).[2] They are all benign in attributes, hence saviours of the world.[3] In our period, however, Viṣṇu becomes the god 'par excellence' around whom the Avatāra theory is evolved. The list of the avatāras was enlarged[4] and attempted to be systematized.[5] The *Vāyu Purāṇa* enumerates[6] Nārāyaṇa, Vāmana, Narasiṃgha, Dattātreya, Māndhātā, Rāma-Jāmdagnya, Rāma-Dāśarathī, Vedavyāsa, Budhha, and Kalki, the ten incarnations of Viṣṇu. The *Matsya Purāṇa* gives the same list but includes Kṛṣṇa in place of Buddha.[7]

The elastic theory of incarnation provided enough scope to include a number of important figures and the sectarian deities in its fold, so much so that the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* would say that the incarnations of Hari are innumerable[8] and the list is quite enlarged.[9]

The theory of incarnation exposes two main motives of contemporary theologians. Firstly, we find efforts for syncretism of not only the emerging deities but also of various historical and non-historical figures and legendry creatures like fish, boar, tortoise etc. Preachers, sages, and Epic heroes also appear in the list. One important aspect of this theory is that it describes Kalki as the last and future incarnation to take his birth in a Brāhmaṇa family in order to destroy the Dasyu and the Mlecchas.[10] In the Allahabad Pillar Inscription[11] Samudragupta is shown to have been endowed with Viṣṇu's attributes. We know that the first revival of Vedic tradition was inaugurated by Puṣyamitra Śuṅga, a Brāhmaṇa of Bhāradvāja gotra. It cannot be said with certainty whether this historical phenomenon was imported in duly conceptualised Brāhmaṇic form of Kalki or was simply an assertion of the idea of Brāhmaṇas' custodianship of Vedic orthodoxy in general. The spirit of syncretism reaches its perfection in the *Bhagavad-*

[1] *ṚV*, VI.49.13.
[2] *ŚBr.*, I.2.5.1ff.
[3] *TSam.*, VII.1.5; *ŚBr.*, VI.2.11ff; *TBr.*, I.1.3.
[4] *Mbh.*, XII.337.36.
[5] ibid, XII.326.67-98.
[6] *Vāyu P.*, 98.71-104.
[7] *Mat.P.*, 47.9ff; cf. *HVP*, I.41.
[8] *Bhāg. P.*, I.3.26.
[9] *Bhāg. P.*, II. Chs. 7 and 8; XI. Ch. 4; *Ag.P.*, Chs.II-XVI and *Garuḍa P.*, I.13ff.
[10] *Viṣ. P.*, IV.24.26; *Mat. P.*, 47.248; *Bhāg. P.*, XII.2.14-23; see also R.B.Pandey, *Purāṇa Viṣayānukramaṇī*, Pt. I, 1957, B.H.U., pp. 43-44.
[11] vide, Fleet, *CII*, III, pp. 9ff.

gītā,[1] wherein the tenth chapter presents Kṛṣṇa identifying himself with the best of all cults and categories, who are declared to be his Vibhūtis (glories).

Secondly, the theory of incarnation has also a bearing on the psychology of the Kali age. The decaying conditions of the socio-religious institutions demanded such orientations as to enable the Neo-Orthodoxy to stand up to disruptive forces. The *Bhagavadgītā* declares that whenever there is a decline of dharma and unrighteousness is in the ascendant, Kṛṣṇa manifests himself for the protection of the Virtuous, for the destruction of evil-doers, and for establishing dharma on a firm footing.[2] Thus the God incarnated assures the frustrated people of eradication of their troubles. It was a robust optimism offered to society in distress. This was a pragmatic idea in which personal relationship with gods on emotional planes were established and gods were conceived in iconographic human forms.

9. Neo-Orthodoxy and Heterodox Sects

Buddhism was already popular with the masses by the time of Aśoka. Its loss of political patronage in the Magadhan region under the Śuṅgas and their successors was overcompensated by the foreign rulers like Menander and Kaniṣka etc., in the North-West and Mathura regions. The rivalry between orthodoxy and Buddhism for supremacy forced the champions of both the creeds to transform their respective faith into popular religions. In the process both acted and reacted against each other till they were induced to come to terms. It is interesting to note that this rivalry instead of separating them further brought them nearer. The process of Hinduization of Buddhism is traced[3] right from the days of the Buddha himself but Mahāyānism, which was the most popular of the Buddhist sects of our period, marks as much the drift from early Buddhism as it betrays influences of Neo-Orthodoxy in its tenets.

The devotional worship[4] of the Buddha and his relics finds place in Buddhism and its popularity during our period is proved by the devotional motives depicted on the stupas at Bharahuta,[5] Sanchi,[6] and Amravati.[7] The refuge in triratna reminds us of the celebrated passage of *Gītā* (XVIII.66) wherein Kṛṣṇa exhorts Arjuna to take total refuge in him. Like Bhakti, the doctrine of Śraddhā[8] (devotional faith) becomes in Buddhism a superb

[1]*Gītā*, X.21ff.
[2]*Gītā*, IV.7-8.
[3]J.G. Jennings, *The Vedantic Buddhism of the Buddha*, London, 1948, pp. LVff; ibid LVIIIff.
[4]*Milinda.*, IV. 3.24-27; *SBE*, XXXV, Pt. I, pp. 246ff; *Mahāvaṃsa*, ed. Turner, p. 19.
[5]Cunninghan, *Stūpa of Bharhuta*, p. 110, Pl. XIII side and Pl. XXX, Fig. I.
[6]Fergusson. *Tree and Serpent Worship*, Pl. IX, X, Xa, XI, XIII, XX, Fig. 4., XIX, XI, XXVIII, Figs. 1 and 3.
[7]ibid, Pl. LXXX, LXXVI, LXXVIII, Fig. 3 and Pl. LXXXIX.
[8]*Milinda.*, *SBE*, XXXV, pp. 54-55, Jennings, op. cit., p. 597.

means to attain the unattainable. The development of 'Buddha-Pūjā'[1] with flowers, garlands, perfumes, flags, banners, music[2] etc., must have contributed to the formulation of the concept of popular Buddha, i.e., Sammā-Saṃbuddha (the Buddhas for all) having attributes similar to Viṣṇu, Kṛṣṇa etc., which is distinguished from the 'Pacceka Saṃbuddha.'[3] Further, in the *Saddharma Puṇḍarīka* Buddha is presented as an eternal god coming down to the earth in different aêons, like Viṣṇu, in human forms.[4] The *Lalitavistara* seems to present the Buddha performing Līlā (sports) like Krsna.[5] The influence of the Brāhmanical movement of Bhakti must have been instrumental in the formulation of the aêonical manifestations of the Buddha.[6] Apart from the dire need of making the Buddhist creed acceptable to masses, the Brāhmaṇa converts particularly the great divines like Nāgasena, Aśvaghoṣa, Asaṅga etc., must have been responsible for the internal transformation of Buddhist creed changing completely a simple ethical faith into a robust devotional cult.

Thus, Mahāyānism, being in its essentials a creed much similar to Neo-Orthodoxy, paved the way for the Brāhmaṇa theologians to strike out a 'rapprochement' with Buddhism declaring the Buddha as an 'avatāra' of Viṣṇu[7] towards the end of our period.

Jainism claimed to its fold kings like Mahāpadmananda, Dhanananda, Candragupta Maurya, Khāravela etc. but it did not prove such a great rival to the Vedic orthodoxy as did Buddhism. The Jaina literature itself was compiled later than our period.[8] Besides, by freely incorporating many of the Brāhmaṇical Gṛhya rites, Janism came under the influence of Neo-Orthodoxy. Further, Mahāvīra is described as a Brāhmaṇa[9] and Vāsudeva (Viṣṇu) is accepted as a god[10] in Jainism. Indra finds an honourable place in Jaina theology.[11] The Jaina Arhatas and Bhāgavatas are equated and the epic heroes Baladeva and Vāsudeva are included among the Śalākā puruṣas of the Jaina tradition.[12] The legends of Kṛṣṇa and Vāsudeva were incorporated in Jaina theology and the elements of theism[13] soon crept into the creed of extreme austerity. As was the case of the Buddha, the Jaina

[1] *Dhammapada*, *Khuddaka Nik.*, I, ed. Kashyap, p. 36, vs. 195-96.

[2] *Mahāvatthu*, *SBB*, II, pp. 329, 362.

[3] *Milinda.*, IV.1.25-26; *Puggal Paññatti*, VI.1, p. 70, IX.1; *Divyā.*, pp. 293-94; *Kathāvatthu*, XVIII. 3, pp. 326; *Lalita.*, pp. 400, 488, 14 and 15.

[4] *Sad. Puṇḍ.*, II.77-98; *SBE*, XXI. vs. 3ff; *Milinda.*, III.7.7; *SBE*, XXXV, p. 129; Raychaudhuri, *MSEHVS*, pp. 73ff; cf. *Gītā*, IV. 6-7.

[5] Nariman, *Literary History of Sanskrit Buddhism*, Bombay, 1923, pp. 19ff.

[6] Thomas, *History of Buddhist Thought*, London, 1933, pp. 149f.; see also *Sad Puṇḍ.*, Ch. 24.

[7] *Mat. P.*, 47.247; *Bhāg. P.*, I.3.24; II.7.37; X.40.22.

[8] *SBE*, XIX, Pt. II, p. 301.

[9] *Sūtra-Kṛtāṅga*, *SBE*, XLX, p. 301.

[10] *Uttarādhyayana*, *SBE*, XLX, p. 48.

[11] *Sūtra-Kṛtāṅga*, *SBE*, XLX, Pt. II, p. 290.

[12] ibid, p. 292.

[13] *Kalpa-Sūtra*, *SBE*, XXII, Pt. I, 224-26.

tīrthaṅkara Ṛṣabhadeva finds mention in the avatāras of Viṣṇu in the later (6th century AD) Brāhmaṇical work, *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*.[1]

Ājīvikism too could not escape the impact of the Neo-Orthodoxy. Kern[2] and Bühler[3] have opined that one section of Ājīvikas had been associated with Brāhmaṇical Bhāgavatism. Though Bhandarkar has refuted this view, he himself interprets the term 'babhanesu ājīvikas,' occurring in Aśoka's Pillar Edict VII, to signify Brāhmanical Ājīvikas.[4] Utpala, commenting on Varāhamihira's *Bṛhajjātaka* (XXI), interprets the term Vṛddhaśrāvaka as the Bhikṣus taking to asceticism of Māheśvara cult and the Ājīvikas taking refuge in Nārāyaṇa.[5] It can be safely concluded that some sections of Ājīvikas were influenced by the emerging Vaiṣṇavism and Śaivism.

Thus the theistic movement of Neo-Orthodoxy sought to be popularised by the Brāhmaṇas had so wide a sway that almost all the heterodox religious systems originating from the ascetic tradition in the sixth century BC felt its overwhelming impact. In the process of restructuring their creeds the heterodox divines had shed off much of their rebellious doctrines.

10. The Popular Beliefs in Neo-Orthodoxy

The Epic-Purāṇic Religious system shows some revolutionary changes in the Brāhmaṇical fold too. The cult of sacrifice, meant for the twice-borns, was losing its importance of the bygone days.[6] The theologians of Neo-Orthodoxy, aiming at the evolution of a system representing the faith of vast masses, most of whom, not being entitled to the Vedic rites, had but to introduce such measures as to lead them to salvation through easier means, best suited to the capabilities and imagination of the common people. A set of new beliefs had been instituted in Tīrthas, prayers, fasts, upāsanā, temple worship etc.

Tīrtha

Though the *Ṛgveda* itself contains passages[7] referring to tīrtha, P.V. Kane rightly opines[8] that the tendency to extol the tīrthas in comparison to Yajñas is found only in the *Mahābhārata* and the Purāṇas. The *Mahābhārata* says that pilgrimage leads to liberation, making persons of all the four castes free from the cycle of rebirth.[9] According to the Purāṇas, even a sinful man attains purity by pilgrimage, nothing to say of the righteous

[1]II, Ch.7; ibid, VI, Ch. 8.
[2]Kern as cited by Bhandarkar, *IA*, 1912, pp. 286-90ff.; see also Basham, *HDĀ*, p. 170.
[3]*IA*, XX, p. 362.
[4]Bhandarkar, *Aśoka*, 2nd ed., pp. 177-78.
[5]*ERE*, vide under *Ājīvika*, pp. 266f; Basham, op. cit., p. 179.
[6]*Mbh.*, BE. XII.340.82-87; Crit. E. XXII.327.73-76ff.
[7]*ṚV*, X.31.3; also Sāyaṇa's commentary thereunder; *TSaṃ.*, VI.1.1.1-2.
[8]Kane, *HDŚ*, IV, 1953, p. 554.
[9]*Mbh.*, III.80.51.

ones.[1] The merit of pilgrimages to Prayaga, Kāśī, Gaya, Mathura. Kurukṣetra, Puṣkara, Dvārakā etc. is held very high. Only a 'darśana' (sacred view) of Varanasi expiates the crime of Brahmahatyā.[2] The grains offered to the manes at Gaya never fails to reach them.[3] Even pronouncing: 'I will go to Kurukṣetra' washes away sins.[4] Marching towards Prayāga for pilgrimage yields the merit of Aśvamedha sacrifice at every step.[5] Again, according to the Viṣṇu Smṛti, the 'Tīrthaputra' Brāhmaṇa is considered as 'Paṅktipāvana.'[6] The observance of fasts, penance, prayers, and gifts etc., at pilgrimages are said to yield greater merit.

Tīrthas open to all

The democratization of Neo-Orthodoxy was the outcome of the attempt to synthesize the diverse cults of worship by bringing them to the Brāhmaṇic fold. This was also a way to encounter the heterodox challenge. Thus tīrthas were open to all without any barrier of caste, creed, or sex, making salvation possible for all through easier means. The *Matsya Purāṇa* declares that Brāhmaṇa, Kṣatriya, Vaiśya, Śūdra, Varṇasaṃkara, Mlecchas etc. all who breathe their last at 'Avimuktakṣetra' attain the bliss of Śivapura (Śiva's abode, *i.e.*, heaven).[7] The Cāṇḍālas together with other various castes of low grade also attain the same merit through tīrtha.[8] The *Mahābhārata* also provides the same merit of liberation from the bondage of birth and death for all as the return of Pilgrimage, which was attainable by men and women alike.[9] It is ordained that in pilgrimage one should observe and practise Brahmacarya, penance, Śrāddha (especially at Gaya),[10] gift, sacrifice, and even suicide.[11] It is strange that though suicide is neither supported by the Vedas nor by popular precepts, even then dying at Prayaga was preached.[12] We know that Dhaṅga Candela courted death at Prayaga when he was quite advanced in age.

Institutionalization of Tīrthas Attributed to Ṛṣis

The ṛṣis, the thinkers 'par excellence,' played a significant part in the evolution of Indian culture. In the *Mahābhārata* and the Purāṇas[13] it is said that though Ṛṣis and gods have laid down that sacrifices be performed, but

[1]*Vāyu P.*, 77.125; *Bḍ. P.*, III. 13.133-34.
[2]*Mbh.*, BE. III. 84.79 (b).
[3]ibid, III.85.8.
[4]*Mbh.*, III.81.2; For various kinds of Tīrthas see *Mbh.*, III. Ch. 80.
[5]*Mat. P.*, 108.9; cf. also, 106.21: cf. *Viṣ. Sm.*, 35.6.
[6]*Viṣ. Sm.*, 83. 1 and 9; *Mat. P.*, 112. 12-15.
[7]*Mat. P.*, 181.19; see also 181.20-21; 184.31-32.
[8]ibid, 184.56.
[9]*Mbh.*, III. 80.51-54.
[10]*Vāyu. P.*, 105.8-9 and 14-15.
[11]*Mat. P.*, ch. 106.
[12]*Mbh.*, III.83.78.
[13]*ṚV*, X.78.1.

the poor cannot afford to undertake them as they require a lot of things, priests, and wives. Only kings and wealthy people are capable of performing them. The poor, destitutes, and men without friend could not undertake these rites. In view of this the Ṛṣis declared the tīrthas to be more efficacious than sacrifices, for kings and poor alike.[1]

The democratization of the Vedic fold was one of the most urgent problem before the Brāhmaṇa theologians. The anxiety of the authors to extend the new religious system beyond the aristocratic cult of sacrifice is expressed in clear terms. The movement to realise a wholesale assimilation of diverse people through cultural synthesis had but to break such confines, especially when orthodoxy was involved in great contest with heterodoxy for popularity. The explanation given in these passages in regard to the evolution of the tīrthas should also be taken to explain the situation, pressing for the transformation of the Vedic fold into a popular faith in general.

The Economic Function of Tīrthas

Tīrtha in its developed form was primarily a religious institution, yet its economic function[2] is no less marked. By its propagation the theologians opened tremendous scope of patronage for the Brāhmaṇas who realized their economic motivation from pilgrims of the diverse social strata. Besides the religious considerations, some of the important tīrthas like Varanasi, Prayaga, Mathura, Kurukṣetra, Prabhāsa, Dvārakā etc., on account of their being the bases of the political power, became comparatively peaceful and secure seats of commercial activity. A considerable bulk of the clientele of tīrthas must have consisted of the pilgrims who served as the source of subsistence and profit for the local priests and the traders alike. In Arabia, Mecca, a seat of political power, used to become safe for commerce on the sacred occasion of the Holy Haz.[3] It is interesting to note that pilgrimages do not only grant spiritual merit but, by undertaking them all sorts of mundane aspirations are also realised. Even by mere extolling them, 'one secures wealth, heaven, destruction of enemies, enhancement of intelligence; poor men get wealth, kings conquer the earth, Vaiśyas make money in commerce, and the Śūdras too obtain their desired objects.'[4] It sounds more like the magical efficacy ascribed to tīrthas, but the idea of securing worldly objects must have been the actuality of life and the tīrthas, specially as trade centres, provided the social situation for materializing their respective goals by the general masses.

The injunctions of the theologians of subsequent times kept the local Brāhmaṇas of the tīrthas flourishing on the gifts of pilgrims. The *Varāha*

[1] *Mbh.*, III.80.34-38; *Mat. P.*, 112.12-15.

[2] Upadhyay, see also "The Origins and Functions of the Tīrthas. . . . ." paper presented at the 37th session of the Indian History Congress, Calicut.

[3] *ERE*, Under Pilgrimage, pp. 11, 22.

[4] *Mbh.*, BE. III.85.101-3.

Purāṇa (165.25-8) recommends that at Mathura a pilgrim should prefer to honour a Brāhmaṇa born and bred up in Mathura, who is Viṣṇu in form, rather than a Brāhmaṇa well-versed in the Vedas but hailing from outside. Likewise at Gaya only local Brāhmaṇas, no matter if they be devoid of learning and spiritual qualities, are to be invited to the Śrāddha ceremony.[1] Further lavish gifts to the Brāhmaṇas are enjoined upon. Only unrestrained spending of wealth grants merit to a person at Gaya.[2] The provision of making gifts according to one's capacity at a tīrtha is also there[3] but at Prayaga a Kapila cow adorned with ornaments of gold is to be given to a Brāhmaṇa.[4] The gift of cows, gold, precious stones, pearls etc. makes a pilgrimage fruitful.[5] The greediness of the Brāhmaṇas of Gaya is legitimatized by the myth that it is the result of Brahma's curse on them.[6] In order to justify the practice of making fabulous gifts Brahmā is also presented[7] to have given cows, houses, and land to the Brāhmānas. Curiously enough, even the Rākṣasas and Daityas are said to be making oblations to fire with Vedic hymns at pilgrimages.[8] It seems that such illustrations were invented to enlist the patronage of the people to Neo-Orthodoxy, who were originally outside the pale of Vedic culture. The rites to be performed[9] at one's native place before and after the pilgrimage required the services of the Brāhmaṇa priests. These injunctions not only suggest wide distribution of the Brāhmaṇas but positively encourage the same. The expansion of Vedic culture required the mobility of the Brāhmaṇas. There must have been such motivation responsible for the dictum[10] that, like a snake devouring a mouse, a Brāhmaṇa is devoured by the earth who does not visit other regions.

Thus, the theologians of our period, envisaging to establish a network of tirthas spread all over the subcontinent, helped the distribution of the Brāhmaṇas far and wide, who, though not often presenting a puritan religious behaviour, certainly went a long way in socializing the neo-orthodox cultural values and norms, especially at the lower level of society.

Neo-Orthodoxy Beyond Madhyadeśa

It is significant to note that the movement of cultural synthesis broke the confines of the Madhyadeśa, which was still extolled by the old orthodoxy, typically represented in the *Manusmṛti*.[11] In spite of this fact conser-

[1]*Padma Purāṇa*, V.29.212; *Vāyu P.*, 82.26-8., ibid, 82.25-27.
[2]*Padma Purāṇa*, IX.179-181.
[3]*Mbh.*, III.80.50.
[4]*Mat. P.*, 105.16-22.
[5]ibid, 105.13-14; ibid, 106. 10; *Mbh.*, BE. III.85.82-83.
[6]*Agni P.*, 114.37.
[7]*Vāyu P.*, 106.37-84.
[8]*Mbh.*, BE. III.82.94-98.
[9]Kana, *HDŚ*, IV, pp. 583f.
[10]*Mbh.*, XII. 23.15.
[11]*Manu*, II.19-23.

vatism had to yield to popular faith and the authors of the Epics and the Purāṇas led the path. The city of Gaya, a pilgrimage of the Buddhists, lying out of the Madhyadeśa in the disparaged region of Magadha, was made a must for the entire Hindu world as a tirtha. This spirit of expansion was really a revolutionary change in the Brāhmaṇic fold occurring in our period, which in due course of time covered practically the whole country. Most of the important cities, places, and rivers of the country became sacred to Neo-Orthodoxy and pilgrimages to those places were ordained. The geo-cultural unity of the country is the legacy of our period.

Vows, Fasts, Prayers etc.

In our age many new practices developed, which were congenial to the Bhakti doctrine. Vratas (vows) were practised in the Vedic age[1] also. Vrata on the day of the Darśapūrṇamāsa-iṣṭi occurs in the *Taittirīya Saṃhitā*.[2] Manu treats Vrata as a substitute and prāyaścitta for Vedic rites.[3] In the Purāṇas it is held as a direct means of attaining salvation which the sages and the rulers performed.[4] Other means for expiation and attainment of merit are repentance,[5] tapas,[6] sacrifice,[7] Japa or recitation[8] of Vedic hymns and Upavāsa[9] (fasting). These practices were popularized alongwith the movement of theism. It is further said that the fruit obtained through meditation in Satyayuga, by sacrifice in Tretā, and by means of worship of the gods with flower in the Dvāpara, is attainable in the Kali age only by 'Harikīrtana,' i.e., prayers in praise of the gods.[10] While the recitation of the Vedic hymns was prescribed exclusively for the twice-borns, especially the Brāhmaṇas, the popular form of 'Kīrtana' was meant for all.

Gift

Manu declares that penance was the primary religious act in the Kṛta age, knowledge in the Tretā, Yajña in the Dvāpara, while gift is the only meritorious act in the Kali age.[11] Acceptance of gifts was the exclusive right of the Brāhmaṇas, which they are exhorted to deserve by leading an ideal life prescribed for them. Only Brāhmaṇas well-versed in the Vedas were lawfully authorised to the 'Śrāddha feast.'[12] The Śrāddha feast given

[1] *AV*, VI.133.2.
[2] *TSaṃ*., I.6.7.1-2; VI.2.5.3-4; *VSaṃ*., IV.11; *ŚBr*., III.2.2.10, 14, 17.
[3] *Manu*, XI.41, see also *VDS*, 21.27; *Viṣ. Sm*., 54.13.
[4] *Mat. P*., ch. 55, 66, 70 etc.
[5] *Manu*, XI.229-30.
[6] *GDS*, 19.15-17; *Manu*, XI.239.
[7] *VDS*, 26.10ff; *Manu*, VIII.105; XI.34, *Yāj*., II.83.
[8] *Manu*, XI.46. also II.85-87; *Viṣ. Sm*., 55.10-21; *VDS*, 26.9-11.
[9] *GDS*, 19.11; *Manu*, XI.203; XI.166, 288, vide Kane, *HDŚ*, IV, pp. 52-54.
[10] *Viṣ. P*., VI.2.15-17; *Bhāg. P*., XII.3.52.
[11] *Manu*, I.86.
[12] *Manu*, III.128-38.

to a Brāhmaṇa devoid of Vedic rites fails to bear fruit.[1] Manu says that it is better to feed one's own friends and relatives when a learned Brāhmaṇa is not available[2] because feast and 'dakṣiṇā' given only to a learned Brāhmaṇa yield merit to both the donor and the donee.[3] Gifts to the Brāhmaṇas were given inflated importance[4] in the Smṛtis, Epics, and the Purāṇas. Gift to and feeding of the 'Veda-pāragā' and 'Ahitāgni' Brāhmaṇas are deemed highly meritorious.'[5] The Purāṇas contain a number of such stories which were meant for extolling the gift to the Brāhmaṇas. From early times gifts to the Brāhmaṇa-priests were parts of sacrifices. Sometimes, as the Jātaka stories tell us,[6] the Brāhmaṇas advised the kings to undertake sacrifices only to exact rich gifts, thus, betraying their greed. But the merit of gifts was preached in the Buddhist texts and by Aśoka also.

11. Temple Worship and Neo-Orthodoxy

Temple worship developed to considerable importance in our period. Image worship, the nucleus of the temple worship, was essentially a pre-Āryan religious system. It is testified by the Harappan terra-cotta figurines and seals bearing iconographic representations of the proto-Śiva and the mother goddess.[7] Even after the destruction of the Mohenjo-dāro and Harappan cities, image worship must have continued in non-Vedic circles till, with the lapse of time, cultural interaction resulted in its prominent reappearance in the orthodox fold with due Vedic stamp. This was again due to the efforts of Brāhmaṇa theologians to evolve a composite religion, equally incorporating Āryan and non-Āryan elements. The theory of Śūdra[8] or Buddhistic origin of temple-worship does not carry any conviction with us.

From about 4th Century BC onwards we find beyond doubt the traces of image worship as a cult of Neo-Orthodoxy. In the *Baudhāyana Gṛhya Sūtra* there is a mention of image worship in connection with the ceremony of the first outing of the infant from the house (Upaniṣkramaṇa).[9] Gautama ordains[10] a student to do a circumambulation of the temple if he gets it on

[1] *Manu*, III.142.
[2] ibid, III.144.
[3] ibid, III.143.
[4] *GDS*, 19.16; *Manu*, XI.139; *Viṣ. Sm.*, 92.4ff; *Yāj.*, III.2.
[5] see Hazra, op. cit., p. 239; *Mat. P.*, 265.2-3.
[6] Fick, *SONEIBT*, p. 183ff.
[7] vide, Basham, *The Wonder that was India*, p. 13. Terracotta Figurines illustrated and Plate IX, Fig. a, c, d, f; pp. 23-24.
[8] *JRAS*, 1928, pp. 15-23. Farquhar held the view that it originated firstly among the Śūdras, cf. Charpenter's view vide *IA*, 1927, pp. 89-90; Srinivas, Ayengar, *Outline of Indian Philosophy*, p. 128; Coomaraswamy, *HIIA*, p. 5; see also Kane, op. cit., II, Pt. II, p. 711.
[9] *Bau. Gṛ. Sūtra*, II.3.13.
[10] *GDS*, IX.12-13; also IX.44; *ĀDS*, I.11.30.20; *Śāṇkh. Gṛ. Sūtra*, IV.12.15.

his way. Its prevalence in the Mauryan times is further evidenced[1] by the description of the images of Śiva, Skanda, and Viśākha by Patañjali who refers[2] to image worship with the special mention of the sale of images by the Mauryan kings. We have already marked the bewailings of the author of the *Vana Parva* over the sweeping replacement of temples by the Buddhist relic Stūpas.[3] Kauṭilyan plan of the capital reserved[4] a centre for the shrines of various deities.[5]

The archaeological remains of temples, however, do not go beyond the Gupta period. But the above evidence shows that temple architecture must have become quite advanced by the days of Kauṭilya.[6] Why no example has survived to our day may be explained as due to the use of perishable materials. It is to be noted that the Greek ambassador, Heliodorus, seems to have raised the celebrated Garudaḍhvaja before a temple of Vāsudeva at Vidiśā as two railings, one being a solid morticed slab wall, have been found there.[7] On some of the coins of the Audumbaras, belonging to the second century BC, representations of early Indian temples in the forms of domical pavilions are found. The trident (Triśūla) and battle-axe (Paraśu) depicted thereon certainly make them the representations of Śiva temples.[8] The Nagari inscription again of the second century BC refers to a temple of Saṅkarṣaṇa and Vāsudeva, probably, made out of wooden materials.[9] V.S. Agrawala has studied the two standing images found from the Mat site near Mathura and holds them to be the images of Śiva and his gaṇa Pramatha Nandī probably built by Wima Kadphises who was a Māheśvara.[10]

12. Synthesis of Cultural Values

While the fire cult was a driving force in the eastward penetration of the Brāhmaṇa priests,[11] it proved futile in face of the world-renouncing ascetic

[1] *Pāṇini, Aṣṭādh.*, V.3.99.

[2] *Mahābh.*, (Kielhorn), II, p. 420.

[3] *Mbh.*, BE. XIII.10.16-20; ibid, XIII.70.16; ibid, XIII.112.11; also ibid XIII.10.14-20.

[4] *KArth.*, II.4.24.

[5] Kauṭilya does not mention Viṣṇu in this enumeration, though he himself bore, as tradition informs us, the name Viṣṇugupta' (protected by Viṣṇu). It would suggest that by the fourth or third century BC the worship of Viṣṇu had not yet become prominent in the Magadhan region or in the capital itself. Lakṣmi too may not have well associated with Viṣṇu at that time. Besides, most of the deities mentioned represent the aspirations of the nobility, i.e., victory, prosperity, luxury etc., and suit also the general spirit of the treatise which supports imperial ambitions and preaches positivism in politics.

[6] Coomaraswamy, *HIIA*, pp. 42, 47; Gupta, *Bhāratīya Vāstukalā*, p. 84.

[7] Bhandarkar, "Excavation at Besanagar," *ASIAR*, 1914-15, p. 5.

[8] Allan, *BMCCAI*, Pl. 15, Nos. 1-10.

[9] Bhandarkar, "The Architectural Remains and Excavations at Nagari," *MASI*, 1920, p. 6; cf. Coomaraswamy, op. cit., p. 48.

[10] Agrawala, "A Catalogue of the Images of Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva in Mathura Art," *JUPHS*, XXII, 1949, p. 127; vide illustrations *ASIAR*, 1911-12, Pls. LVI, LV, Figs. 9 and 10.

[11] *ŚBr.*, I.4.1.14-17.

trend of this region so much so that the Brāhmaṇas sometimes sought spiritual knowledge from Kṣatriya rulers like Pravāhaṇa Jaivali,[1] Aśvapati Kekaya[2] and king Janaka.[3] Despite the formal acceptance of the authority[4] of the Vedas, showing efforts of compromise, the fact remains that the nucleus of the Upaniṣadic thought was pre-Āryan. The cultural change was relatively abrupt. It was not the natural development of the orthodox Vedic culture but seems rather a strong protest against the same.[5] The cultural values of this tract of land betray a pessimistic view of life. The theory of 'Karma' and rebirth, which sought recourse to final liberation, was based on primitive animism. Liberation was to be attained by the knowledge of Brahma which could be possible through meditation and an ethical way of life.[6] Thus penance was essential for the final deliverance. The change of cultural values brought about a relative transformation in the Brāhmaṇa class also.[7] There is a great difference between the Brāhmaṇas as the Vedic fire-priests and the Brāhmaṇas as Upaniṣadic seekers of knowledge. It seems that the ethical view of life and the doctrines preaching morality owe their origin to the Upaniṣadic thought-current which was incorporated by the Brāhmaṇas in the socio-religious institutions of the Vedic tradition even in pre-Buddhist times.

The *Mahābhārata* shows the existing tension between the world-affirming (Pravṛtti Mārgī) and world-negating (Nivṛtti Mārgī) doctrines. At one place it is clearly said that the Vedas lay down only three values of life, i.e., Dharma, Artha, and Kāma and Yudhiṣṭhira had to seek superior attainment (obviously liberation) from some other source.[8] The long discourse between sages Kapila and Syūmaraśmi on the efficacy of sacrifice in connection with king Nahuṣa's Yajña indicates the same conflict of the two opposing trends.[9] Again, an indulgence is found on the question of animal killing in the sacrifice of the king Uparicara Vasu.[10] It shows that non-violence was getting in vogue replacing animal sacrifice. These instances speak of the impact of ascetic movement on the Vedic fold. It is interesting to note that the *Mahābhārata* presents two sets of seven Ṛṣis said to have expounded these two kinds of values. One set of the seven Ṛṣis, viz. Sana, Sanatasujāta, Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanatakumāra, Kapila, and Sanātana—are said to be the spiritual sons of Brahman. They follow the religion of renunciation (Nivṛtti dharma). They are the foremost of all persons conver-

[1]*Ch. Up.*, V.3; 1.8; *Bṛ. Up.*, VI.2.
[2]*Ch. Up.*, V.11-12.
[3]*ŚBr.*, XI.6.2.1ff.
[4]*Bṛ. Up.*, IV.I.1.
[5]*Muṇḍ. Up.*, 1.2.1.7-11; *Br. Up.*, III.9.6-21; *Ch. Up.*, 1.10.12; IV.1-3.
[6]*Kaṭh. Up.*, I.2.2-3; and Commentary of Rāmānuja thereunder, vide commentary on the *Brahma Sūtra*, IV.1.13; cf. *Muṇḍ. Up.*, IV.4.23.
[7]vide *supra*, pp. 3-4.
[8]*Mbh.*, XII.263.1.
[9]*Mbh.*, XII. Chs. 260, 262.
[10]*Mbh.*, XII. Chs. 322 and 324.

sant with Yoga. They have profound knowledge of Sāṃkhya philosophy. They are the teachers of the scriptures on duty and it is they who introduced the dharma of liberation.[1] While the other seven Ṛṣis, viz. Marīci, Atri, Aṅgiras, Pulastya, Pulaha, Kratu and Vasiṣṭha, known conjointly as Citraśikhaṇḍins,[2] are said to be the preceptors of the Vedas and the followers of the world-affirming dharma.[3] Further, the seven Citraśikhaṇḍin Ṛṣis, who adhered to the Vedic orthodox world-affirming trend, are said to have unanimously promulgated the Pāñcarātra scripture[4] which synthesized both the opposing values of life and contained discourses on Dharma (religion), Artha (profit), Kāma (pleasure) and Mokṣa (liberation).[5] Duties for all the people were instituted in it.[6] It is said that Nārāyaṇa himself declared this work, which perfectly follows the four Vedas, to be the authority for the whole world in regard to the dharmas both of action and renunciation.[7] Further, it is mentioned that the Eternal Lotus-navelled deity adopted for himself the Nivṛtti dharma; which is followed by those who are desirous of eternal fruit, but at the same time laid down the Pravṛtti dharma for others with a view to give variety to the universe.[8]

Sages and thinkers exerted for a long time to reach a point of compromise even before our age. But the long debates of the theologians on the relative importance of these opposing values of life amply prove that the integration of these two trends was effected only in our age after protracted doctrinal conflicts. Brāhmaṇas, as custodians of Vedic orthodoxy, asserted the Vedic Pravṛttimārga, but they never failed to realise the growing popularity of the Nivṛtti traditions. In fact, apart from the impact of the world-renouncing view of heterodoxy, the pre-Āryan Muni—Śramaṇa cultural tradition[9] produced a section of the Brāhmaṇas, as represented in the Upaniṣads, who were the champions of the ascetic trend. They developed Nivṛtti dharma within the orthodox fold. Some of these Brāhmaṇas became distinguished as heretical preachers, like Sañjaya Belaṭṭhiputta and Pūraṇa Kassapa. Some of them who held views of compromise and followed the Upaniṣadic tradition, brought about a steady transformation in orthodox Vedism itself till in our period a conscious attempt was made by the Brāhmaṇa theologians in general to fuse both the traditions together into Neo-Orthodoxy.

[1] *Mbh.*, XII.327.64-66.
[2] ibid, XII.322.27; also ibid, XII.327.57-61.
[3] ibid, XII.327.62.
[4] ibid, XII.322.25, 29.
[5] ibid, XII.322.30.
[6] ibid, XII.322.36(b).
[7] ibid, XII.322.37.
[8] ibid, XII.327.87-88.
[9] Pande, *SOB*, p. 261.

13. Proselytizing Zeal in Neo-orthodoxy

The older Vedic tradition was at its decline in the sense that it was confined in its purest form only to the upper classes, particularly of the Madhya-deśa. Besides, in face of the challenge from the heterodox east and the pressure of non-orthodox Brāgavatism and the Āgamic Śaivism, the custodians of the Vedic traditions had to loosen the orthodox fold in order to meet the new situation. It is truly observed: 'Brahmanism had to expand, or shrink, wither, and die.'[1] While this challenge was met, the Brāhmaṇa theologians as sages or priests never instituted a missionary body for the conversion of individuals to any faith of a particular denomination. The whole process of Brāhmaṇical movement is the story of the cultural synthesis of various tribes and societies, incorporating them in the orthodox fold. Further, the social system, limiting the Vedic rituals to the twice-borns, could not have allowed the institution of a missionary body. All the more, the Brāhmaṇas of Vedic tradition had hardly anything as cult worship or a personality of any founder of a faith with them to which they could enlist the masses. While the superior priest-craft and ritualism helped the Brāhmaṇas at every stage of their attempt at cultural assimilation, the cult worships around the personified deities or tribal totems were by far recruited from the masses, transforming them to fit into the orthodox tradition by a web of myths and legends. In turn some of the Vedic celestial deities were reduced to the form of personal gods but raised to a great height.

This process of cultural assimilation, though under the historical exigency, was exceptionally extensive in our period, went on all through later history even upto modern times and the technique of the Brāhmaṇa-priests' cultural synthesis was more or less the same. H.H. Risley observes that 'Brāhmaṇism knows nothing of open proselytism or forcible conversion, and attains its end in a different and more subtle fashion, for which no precise analogue can be found in the physical world. It leaves the existing aggregates very much as they were, and so far from welding them together, after the manner of Islam, into large cohesive aggregates, tends rather to create an indefinite number of fresh groups; but every tribe that passes within the charmed circle of Hinduism is inclined sooner or later to abandon its more primitive usages or to clothe them in some Brāhmaṇical disguise. The strata, indeed, remain, or are multiplied; their relative positions are, on the whole unaltered; only their fossils are metamorphosed into more advance forms. One by one the ancient totems drop off, or are converted by a variety of ingenius devices into respectable personages of the standard mythology; the fetish gets a new name, and is promoted to the Hindu pantheon in the guise of a special incarnation of one of the greater gods; the tribal chief sets up a family priest, starts a more or less romantic family legend, in course of time blossoms forth as a new variety

[1]Hopkins, *Religions of India*, 1895, p. 348.

of Rajputa."[1]

The outwardly closed doors of orthodox Vedism, especially on social frontiers, did not deter the Brāhmaṇas to penetrate into different tribes and assimilate them with steady process into the orthodox fold. From the earliest times the Brāhmaṇa priests claimed independence from kingship making Soma their king.[2] Similarly, they kept themselves above tribal bindings. They changed their association from one king to another for personal reasons as is the case with the Vasiṣṭhas who, in a passage of the *Ṛgveda*,[3] praise the Pūrus but elsewhere they condemn them in favour of the Bharatas.[4] The Brāhmaṇa-priest devised the liquidation of the tribes by prescribing special consecration rites which bring the king above the tribal bonds.[5] But he never failed to assert his magical 'Samana' rites which control the Kṣatra and the Viś, making one superior to the other as he desired.[6] They instituted the Vrātyastoma rite to dissolve the non-Vedic character of the nomadic Vrātyas and assimilate them into the orthodox fold but this technique could not achieve any appreciable success. However, from the Vedic times itself they served a number of ruling families belonging to both the Āryan and non-Āryan tribes. The priests, comparatively dependent on the nobility for subsistence, were never subservient to any particular tribal chief. They could seek the patronage of any tribal chief, especially for economic reasons, and establish contact with the people of that tribe. It is observed[7]: "The flexibility of the Brahmin, though motivated by greed, was useful nevertheless in the process of assimilation with minimum use of violence." We have seen that right from the later Vedic period the Brāhmaṇa class has developed enough versatile characteristics with its ritualistic, magical, and philosophic attributes which, naturally, helped the Brāhmaṇas to adapt themselves easily to any given society or cultural trend, while as priest they would influence that society with their superior ritualism. These qualities of the Brāhmaṇas were helpful in transforming the tribal societies into the standard social structure of Varṇa system. It is to be noted, however, that although the Brāhmaṇas played a positive role in cultural assimilation and integration of different peoples, it cannot be forgotten that active contacts between two or more cultural units were bound to bring about cultural interaction with reciprocal influences on each other. It hardly needed any attempt of the Brāhmaṇas. What they did was to channelize this cultural interaction towards a more easy-going process of assimilation, retaining, to all

[1]vide Risley, *The Tribes and Castes of Bengal*, Bengal Secretariat Press, Calcutta, 1891; Nair, *The Dynamic Brahmin*, p. 62.
[2]vide *Supra*, pp. 7-9.
[3]*ṚV*, VII.96.2.
[4]ibid, VII.18; VII.83.6.
[5]*ABr.*, VIII.4.
[6]ibid, vide *supra*, pp. 7-9.
[7]Kosambi, *ISIH*, p. 127.

possible extent, the Vedic tradition and claiming their own superiority and independence.

The process of cultural assimilation in our period shows that Neo-Orthodoxy was enormously incorporating the non-Vedic cultural elements. In contract to heterodoxy, Brāhmaṇas' attempt to win over the masses was realised by providing them their own religious cults with due Vedic conflexion and systematized form. We can say that proselytism of the Brāhmaṇas was not the direct conversion of the people from other religions to their own, but rather it was the integration of various popular religious systems into the Vedic fold, which automatically Hinduised people in due course of time. There is a far cry from orthodox Vedism of the older times to the popular Neo-Orthodoxy. Renou pertinently remarks[1]: "The link between Vedism and the great epics, the earliest non-Vedic text that we possess, are extremely slender." But the integration between the two traditions was consciously tried for with the peculiarity that in the epic, Smārta, and the Paurāṇika provisions,[2] the Vedic tradition of orthodoxy found complete assertion and was retained to a large extent even in the changed context.

The doors of composite Neo-Orthodoxy, which included popular animism, sophisticated pantheism, and epic monotheism based on devotional worship together with all the allied tenets of pilgrimage and prayer etc., were thrown open to all the Indian masses, even to foreigners, without any restriction of caste, sex or racial barriers. Kṛṣṇa declares[3] to Arjuna: "I am equally present in all beings; there is none hateful or dear to me." . . "Even if a person of the vilest conduct worships me with undivided devotion, he should be regarded as saint, for he has made the choice that is as irrevocable as it is righteous. He quickly becomes a virtuous soul and attains lasting peace, O Arjuna, this is my word of promise that he who loves me with all his heart never perishes."[4] So much so that 'even women, Vaiśyas, Śūdras, and persons of sinful origin attain the supreme goal by taking refuge in me.'[5] It is said that the god is not pleased by the Brāhmaṇahood, or acquiring seerhood etc.; he can be pleased only by pure devotion.[6] It is declared that 'among the devotees of God, there is no distinction of birth, learning, appearance and the like, since they all belong to him.'[7] Thus Bhakti has a universal appeal and a befitting ideal, satisfying the greatest of the intellectuals and the lowest of the lowly alike. It is free from the segregational elements of the caste privileges of twice-born standards. In their integrative zeal the Bhakti theologians transcended all

[1]Renou, *Religions of Ancient India*, p. 6.
[2]vide *infra*, pp. 71ff.
[3]*Gīiā*, IX.29.
[4]*Gītā*, IX.30-31.
[5]*Bhāg. P.*, V.1.35; *Gītā*, IX.32.
[6]ibid, VII.7.52.
[7]*Śāṇḍ. Sūt.*, 78.

racial barriers and extended the merit of refuge in Viṣṇu to all alike, the Kirātas, Hūṇas, Andhras, Pulindas, Pulkasas, Ābhīras, Kaṅkas, Yavanas, Khasas etc.[1] Most of these tribes and castes are held lowly by the Smṛti authors. It is obvious that a proselytizing spirit is dominant in the Bhakti movement of Neo-Orthodoxy. The heterodox challenge, especially the Buddhist movement, was encountered by a positive response and Neo-Orthodoxy progressively gained the upper hand, relegating Buddism to the background. The Vedic fold appeared as much revitalised as it underwent revolutionary changes. It became ascendant in the state and the people, which we shall see elsewhere.[2]

14. Brāhmaṇas as the Custodians of Vedism

Assertion and Extension of the Authority of Vedas

We have seen that the impact of the heterodox movement overhauled the Vedic instituuions.[3] New challenges were directed against the validity of orthodox tradition and the authority of the Vedas. The situation was made all the more precarious by the Upaniṣadic intellectual upsurge which gave a sharp jolt to the orthodox fold from within. The authors of the *Mahābhārata* occupy themselves to a great deal with this problem, where it is declared: "there are some that recognise only four Vedas, and others only three, and some again recognise only two and others only one while another class recognises only Supreme Being."[4] The Epics and the Purāṇas are replete with the passages which assert vehemently the authority of the Vedas. At one place in the Śānti Parva it is said that in the ascending order of superiority of the different species, creatures, bi-peds, and people following 'dharma' (duty), the Brāhmaṇas versed in the Vedas and preachers of the same are the greatest. It is the Veda that makes dharma (duty and righteousness), rites, and its fruits known to the people, and the Brāhmaṇas are the authoritative propagators of its knowledge.[5]

In our period, however, the authority of the Vedas was not only asserted but, as a natural corollary of the process of cultural assimilation, it was extended to all the newly integrated values and religious systems. The Epics and the Purāṇas were asserted to be the fifth Veda,[6] implying that they were continuing the old Vedic tradition. Side by side, the compromising view is stated by Sanatasujāta[7] that they are not conversant with the spirit of the verses, who perform sacrifices after study of the

[1] *Bhāg. P.*, II.4.18; cf. *Śāṇḍilya Saṃhitā* (Bhakti Khaṇḍa), ed. MM. Gopinath Kaviraj, Banaras, 1935, VI.5-6.

[2] vide *infra*, Ch. 8.

[3] vide *supra*, pp. 18ff, 24ff.

[4] *Mbh.*, V.43.23-24.

[5] *Mbh.*, XII. Ch. 229.

[6] *Mbh.*, V.43.23(a).

[7] ibid, BE.V.43. 51ff.

Vedas and do not know the Supreme Being. In the controversy about the comparative superiority of the paths of Yoga and domestic rites, Kapila, though asserting the superiority of the former, declares that 'the Vedas are regarded as authority of all.'[1] That which is against the Vedas is unscriptural, says the Śruti.[2] Again, 'one who is master of the Vedas, knows everything, for everything is established in them—the present, past, and future all exist in the Vedas.'[3] The Vedas are regarded to be the words of god.[4] The ṛṣi Syūmaraśmi says that men of learning regard the Smṛtis as authoritative and follow the Brāhmaṇa (literature) wherein the Vedas are introduced.[5] It is said more than once that the Pāñcarātra scriptures accord well with the Vedas.[6] According to the Purāṇas also, the goddess herself attests the authority of the Vedas.[7] In the *Varāha Purāṇa* the trinity of Hinduism-Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Maheśa are identified with the three Vedas.[8] According to the *Rāmāyaṇa*, the study of the Vedic literature was universally prevalent among the Brāhmaṇas of Ayodhyā.[9] It is said that Vedas bring prosperity to the people since goddess Lakṣmī is present in the sound of the hymns.[10] They are given divine attributes and declared to be eternal.[11] The denial of the authority of the Vedas and carping at the teachings of the ṛṣis destroy one's soul.[12] The Vedas could not be revealed to undesirable persons and their study was limited to the twice-borns. Bhāsa in the Pañcarātra mentions that the Brāhmaṇas even in their old age took increasing vows and were devoted to Vedic studies.[13] That the Smṛti follows the guide line of the Śruti,[14] is an illuminating Simile of Kālidāsa.

In spite of all this assertion of the Vedas, the society had so much changed that they practically lost ground. To the worldly Brāhmaṇas, Kṣatriyas, and Vaiśyas together with the Śūdras, and the vast masses of people assimilated in the Brāhmaṇical fold, who were denied the right of their study, the Vedas had practically no use. Nevertheless, the authors of the Epics and the Purāṇas represent the grim tenacity of the orthodox circle to preserve, assert, and extend the authority of the Vedas. There had always been a section of orthodox Brāhmaṇas which was genuinely dedi-

[1] *Mbh.*, XII.262.1(a).
[2] ibid, XII.261.55.
[3] ibid, XII.262.41.
[4] *Mbh.*, Śānti Parva, translated by Roy, Sect. CCIV, p. 107 CCLXX, p. 291.
[5] *Mbh.*, XII, Roy, IX, p. 282.
[6] *Mbh.*, XII.326.75-6.
[7] *Kūrma P.*, I.12.249ff.
[8] *Varāha P.*, Chs. 2 and 3.
[9] *Rāmāyaṇa*, I.6.14-15; I.21.4-5.
[10] *SBE*, VII, p. 299.
[11] *Manu*, I.23.
[12] *VDS*, XII.41; see also *Manu*, IV.163; *Yāj.*, III.228-29; *Viṣ. Sm.*, 71.83.4-5.
[13] *Pañcarātra*, 1.5(a),
[14] *Raghuvaṃśa*, ed. by Nandargikar, 1897, p. 36.

cated to the study of the Vedas, as we find evidenced by the inscriptions[1] of the Gupta and some of the later kings.

We have seen that against the philosophy of inaction and fatalism, ever growing since *circa* sixth century BC, the doctrine of action was asserted by the custodians of the Vedic tradition. The traditional medium of realization of this doctrine was performance of sacrifices, rituals, and domestic rites which aimed at not only the fulfilment of an individual's social obligations but also the attainment of religious merit. To an extremely orthodox mind, besides the doctrine of inaction, devotionalism was also inconsistent with the path of action.[2] And we find that apart from the Smṛtis, the Epics and the Purāṇas prescribe the performance of Gṛhya ritual and sacrifice. It is to be noted that Viṣṇu is described as the Avatāra of Yajña and is intimately associated with it.[3] Nārāyaṇa[4] and Śiva are also associated with sacrifices.

From the earliest times Vedic ritualism was centered round oblation to Fire. The performance of Agnihotra twice daily—in the morning and the evening—was obligatory,[5] and a lifelong duty. It is ordained in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* that Agnihotra is a long sacrificial session (*sattra*) which ends only with old age or death.[6] Agnihotra and Darśa-pūrṇamāsa were to be performed by all the twice-borns. The *Rāmāyaṇa*,[7] the *Mahābhārata*,[8] and the Smṛtis[9] are full of examples of these rituals being performed by Brāhmaṇas and Kṣatriyas alike—many of them very well versed in the Vedic lore. They are also replete with the adulation of the Vedic rituals. Likewise, the daily recitation of the Gāyatrī mantra was strongly prescribed especially to the Brāhmaṇas dedicated to the studies of the Vedas.[10] In the Ādi Parva,[11] Rudra is presented as saying that only the Brāhmaṇas are authorised to conduct sacrifices performed according to the canonical rules.

Revival of Vedic Sacrifices

The Dharmaśāstras speak of seven forms of the Soma sacrifice, viz. Agniṣṭoma, Atyagniṣṭoma, Ukthya, Ṣoḍaśin, Vājapeya, Atirātra, and Aptoryāma.[12] Manu prescribes its performance at the end of the year.[13] Besides, major Vedic sacrifices like Aśvamedha, Rājasūya, Vājpeya etc. were

[1] vide *infra*, ch. 8.
[2] *Vedānta Sūtra*, *SBE*, XXXIV, p. 29f.
[3] *Bhāg. P.*, II.7.11; *Vāyu P.*, 30.106-7.
[4] *Vāyu P.*, 30.243-44 and 251.
[5] *Manu*, IV.25; *Yāj.*, I.97, 124-25.
[6] *ŚBr.*, XII.4.1.1.
[7] *Rāmāyaṇa*, I.53.14; II.58.18; III.5.26; VIII.9.14.
[8] vide *infra*, Ch. 7.
[9] *Manu*, VI.4-5.
[10] ibid, II.78-84.
[11] *Mbh*, I.22.51-53.
[12] *Lāṭ. Gṛ. Sūtra*, V.4.24; *GDS*, VIII.20.
[13] *Manu*, IV.26; II.4, 23; cf. *Yāj.*, I.125; cf. *VDS*, XI.46; cf. *Śāṇḍ. Gṛ. Sūtra*, III.8.1.

not only highly extolled by the Brāhmaṇa authors but were actually performed by the kings and nobles of our period. Manu exhorts the king to perform various other sacrifices consisting of handsome honoraria to the Brāhmaṇas.[1] He lays down that the merit acquired by an Aśvamedha absolves a man of the sin of Brahmahatyā.[2] In the *Mahābhārata* Yudhiṣṭhira is asked to perform the horse-sacrifice as was done by the victorious Indra in olden times.[3] At places the authors of the Purāṇas also give fresh vigour to animal sacrifices.[4] Killing of animals in the Yajñas was ordained.[5] In the Sabhā Parva Yudhiṣṭhira's Rājasūya sacrifice is described.[6] Many other kings of the day of yore are said to have performed such sacrifices.[7] It is interesting to note that in one legendary story the whole of the earth is said to have been given to saga Kaśyapa by Paraśurāma after the completion of his horse-sacrifice,[8] which in turn was given to the Brāhmaṇas by Kaśyapa.[9] The *Rāmāyaṇa* describes the performance of the Aśvamedha sacrifice by king Daśaratha and[10] his son Rāma.[11]

Historical examples of the Epic-Purāṇic and Dharmaśāstric reassertion of the sacrificial cult are not wanting. The ascendancy of the doctrine of non-violence in a peaceful society under a mighty Emperor like Aśoka heralded the supremacy of the heterodox fold to the lover of the Vedic orthodoxy. The situation, however, turned drastically upside down in a war-stricken society. We find that the fall of the Mauryas sparked off a violent gust of revivalism of Vedic sacrifices which went on well beyond our period.

The Śuṅgas, Bhāraśiva-Nāgas, Vākāṭakas, Guptas and Kadambas all performed[12] sacrifices. Even the Jaina king Khāravela, most probably a contemporary of Puṣyamitra Śuṅga, is credited to have undertaken the Rājasūya Yajña.[13] According to the Pardi plates[14] of Chedi Samb. 207 (456-7 AD) the Traikūṭaka king Daharasena performed the Aśvamedha sacrifice. The Ikṣvāku king Śāntamūla,[15] the Kadamba king Kṛṣṇavarman and the Viṣṇukuṇḍin king Mādhavavarman performed Aśvamedhas together with other sacrifices.[16] The rulers of the Pallava dynasty also

[1] *Manu*, VII.79.
[2] ibid, XI.75-76, 83; cf. *Mbh.*, XII.36.6-10; *GDS*, XXII.10-11; *BDS*, II.1.1.4.
[3] *Mbh.*, BE., XII.34.46.
[4] *Vāyu P.*, 99.36ϵ; *Bḍ. P.*, III.74.185.
[5] *Bḍ. P.*, II.32.47; cf. *Vāyu P.* 59.42; *Bḍ. P.*, IV.6.55; *Mat. P.*, 145.44.
[6] Sabhā Parva, Chs. 30-32.
[7] *Mbh.*, vide Aṣvamedhika Parva.
[8] *Mbh.*, XII.49.56.
[9] ibid, XII.49.57ff.
[10] *Rāmāyaṇa*, I, Chs. 13-14.
[11] ibid, VII. Ch. 7.
[12] For details vide *infra*, Ch. 8.
[13] Hāthīgumphā Inscription. *EI*, XX, p. 79.
[14] *EI*, X, p. 53.
[15] Fleet, *CII*, III, no. 55; *EI*, III, pp. 258, 260.
[16] vide Kane, op. cit., II, pt. II, pp. 978-79.

performed them.[1] According to Allan, a copper coin of Viṣṇusiṃha found at Kanauja has on the reverse a horse before a sacrificial Yūpa and on the obverse a liṅga or Yūpa.[2] It is suggested that it commemorates an Aśvamedha sacrifice. Yūpas have been discovered at Baḍvā and Nāndsā.[3] The sacrifices, above referred to, seem to have covered a large and scattered area of the country and it may be noted that the spirit of revivalism must have been greater in the ideal land of Vedic orthodoxy, approximately the same as Manu's Brahmarṣideśa.[4] Out of the twelve inscribed Yūpas so far discovered in North India eleven belong to this region, while the remaining one was found in Allahabad, which also, according to *Manu*, marks the eastern limit of Madhyadeśa. Besides, these Yūpas belong to the period[5] between AD 102 to AD 371. These inscriptions and Yūpas speak well of the revival of the sacrificial cult in the stronghold of Vedic orthodoxy in our period. These finds are supported by literary works of our period. *Buddhacarita* says, "if Dharma is really your intention, offer sacrifices, that is the Dharma of your family. For with their arms marked by rings of gold and their head dresses bright with the glitter of radiant jewels, the royal seers travelled through sacrifices, the very same path that the great seers reached by their austerities."[6] Its efficacy was held to be so great that even on the earth itself the performer was supposed to get the fruits of heaven.[7]

Thus the Brāhmaṇas as the authors of the Smṛtis, Epics, and Purāṇas reasserted the authority of the Vedas, reiterated the Gṛhya rites, and attempted to revive the Vedic sacrifices with a considerable success. This reassertion of the orthodox Vedic tradition and revitalising it to all possible extents by cultural assimilation, are as we have seen, corroborated by the contemporary literary, epigraphic, and numismatic sources.

[1]*EI*, III, pp. 258, 260; Fleet, op. cit., no. 55.
[2]Allan, *BMCCAI*, Introduction, pp. XCIV, p. 147, Pl. XIX. 13.
[3]*EI*, XXIII, pp. 252ff; Maukharī Inscription, vide *EI*, XXIII, no. 7; ibid, XXIV, no. 34.
[4]vide *infra*, Ch. 5.
[5](i) Īsāpur-Mathura, year 24=102 AD, *ARASI*, 1910-11, pp. 40-48 (ii) Kosam-Allahabad 125 AD, *EI*, XXIV, pp. 245-51. (iii-iv) Nāndasā-Udaipur year 285=225 AD, *IA*, LVIII.53 (v) Barnāla-Jaipur, year 284=227AD, *EI*, XXVI, pp. 119-20. (vi-viii) Baḍvā-Koṭah, year 295=238 AD. *EI*, XXIII, pp. 42-52. (ix) Baḍvā-Kotah, year 238 AD, *EI*, XXIV, pp. 251-52 (x) Nagar-Jaipur year 321=264 AD (xi) Barnāla-Jaipur year 335=278 AD, *EI*, XXIV, pp. 121-3 (xii) Bijayagarh-Bharatapur, year 428=371 AD, *CII*, III, pp. 252-54 and cf. "Yūpa Inscriptions" vide *India Antiqua*, Vogel Presentation Volume, 1947, pp. 78-79.
[6]*Buddhacarita*, X.39-40.
[7]*Pañcarātra*, I.21.

Chapter 4

NEO-ORTHODOXY —ITS DEITIES, RITUALS AND PATRONS

1. Vaiṣṇavism: Its Deities, Ritual and Patrons

Myths and rituals developed around Vaiṣṇava deities show both the pastoral and agricultural elements with increasing attempt to base the cult on an agrarian social milieu. In early Bhāgavatism while Saṅkarṣaṇa represents agricultural ingredients of a plough and club as his implements, Kṛṣṇa pleads[1] for pastoral rites against Sītā Yajña. When Kṛṣṇa's worship merged into that of Viṣṇu, who had some pastoral attributes in the Vedic texts,[2] it was Goloka (World of cows) above the three worlds (strides) which became the heaven[3] for the followers of Vaiṣṇavism, subsisting mainly on pastoral economy. In connection with the agricultural background of the Vaiṣṇava mythology it is to be noted that the role of Indra as the consort of Sītā (furrow) in the Sūtra rituals,[4] could not satisfy the new agricultural community dominated by non-Vedic elements.[5] Not only is the position of Indra assigned to Rāma in relation to Sītā but Sītā is replaced by the vigorous deity Saṅkarṣaṇa (furrow) in the Vaiṣṇava fold. The deluge (*Pralaya*) which symbolically indicates the yearly cycle of monsoon[6] is presided[7] over by Saṅkarṣaṇa. His intimate connection with the peasantry is vouched by the use of spirituous liquor as an important article of ritual woven around him.[8] But Viṣṇu, carefully developed as a fertility god, was conceptualised as the principle or energy behind vegetation.[9] The earth ruined by the poison of snakes is rendered productive by him.[10] Vaiṣṇavism with its increasing base on agriculture is made to retain both the

[1] *HV. P.*, II. Ch. 16; *KArth.*, XIV.3; *Viṣ. P.*, V.10.26.
[2] Muir, *OST*, IV, pp. 64-69.
[3] *Mbh.*, V.101 I and 15. ibid, Ch. 101.
[4] *Pāraskara Gṛhya sūtra*, XIII.16.
[5] see *infra*, pp. 78ff.
[6] Kosambi, *Culture and Civilization of Ancient India*, . . . p. 26.
[7] *Mbh.*, XIII.47.206.
[8] *KArth.*, XIII.3.67.
[9] Gonda, *AEV*, 1954, p. 11f. [10] Hopkins, *EM*, p. 80.

refined ideologies like ahiṃsā etc. and the popular rituals. Balarāma is described as intoxicated, adorned himself with precious stones . . holding plough and club in his hands and worshipped by goddess Vāruṇī (spirituous liquor). Further, Balabhadra, the incarnation of Śeṣa Nāga, drinks liquor with the cowherds of Vraja and ploughs the river Yamunā out of anger.[1] Saṅkarṣaṇa thus, seems to represent the lower strata of peasants. But Viṣṇu-Nārāyaṇa, to the extent they symbolise the ideological aspects of the cult, seem to represent the upper section of the society connected with the organization of agriculture. It is no wonder that Viṣṇu and Nārāyaṇa are creators of Satyayuga which is reflected in the efflorescence of bountiful nature and plenty of grains.[2] Brahmā is asked by Nārāyaṇa to discharge his duty with detachment and lay down the dharma of Yugas[3] (periodical duties) to be performed with ahīṃsā. The myth of Viṣṇu's sleeping on Śeṣa[4] for four months from the eleventh day of the bright fortnight of Aṣāḍha (roughly the month of July) up to the same day of the Kārttika[5] (roughly the month of November), and Indra taking his role of regulating rains or acts of Śrādha-tarpaṇa,[6] makes Viṣṇu function as the fertility[7] concept particularly in the rice-producing society. But with the arrival of winter he is again a sacrificial deity.[8] Thus the theologians have made the agricultural and the ritual functions of Viṣṇu periodically alternating. In fact Viṣṇu's attributes (*Caritam*) are steeped in both the Vedic and popular (*Laukika*) lores.[9] Thus Viṣṇu has an unfailing appeal for the peasants and also for the society based on agriculture. This attribute of Viṣṇu is sought to be socialized by the injunction which required a householder to pronounce, after having the meal, that the eater of the meal, together with the stuff and its essence[10] (*Paripāka*) are Viṣṇu. Vaiṣṇavism in the Epics incorporates[11] thanksgiving services, rain-making magics, description of the bounty of nature, and emphasizes the ritual importance of grains which unmistakably express the mental horizon of rural folk and fulfil the socio-economic aspirations of the pessantry. Further, Viṣṇu's special connection with the lotus is not less important, as it signifies the

[1] *Viṣ. P.*, V. ch. 25.

[2] *Mbh.*, XII.336.25ff; ibid, XII. Ch. 327; ibid, Āraṇyaka Parva, 149.14; ibid, BE. III. Ch. 191.

[3] *Mbh.*, XII.336.28-35 and 52.

[4] The popularity of the myth of Śeṣaśāyin Viṣṇu in the form of Kṛṣṇa is vouched by its mention in Bhāsa, *Avīmāraka*, II.3; Viṣṇu reclining on Ananta Śeṣa is depicted on the doorway of the Daśāvatāra temple of the Gupta times, see Agrawala, *Gupta Art*, Lucknow, 1948, Pl. XII; see also Kālidāsa, *Meghadūta*, Uttaramegha, V.53 and the Gupta Inscriptions, *CII*, III, 1962, p. 77.

[5] *HV. P.*, I.50.23.

[6] ibid, I.50.26.

[7] Gonda, op. cit., pp. 89-91.

[8] *HV. P.*, I. 50.24-25.

[9] Tenemāḥ Śrutayo vyāptā Vaidikyo laukikāśca yāḥ, *HV. P.*, I.50.21(b).

[10] *Viṣ. P.*, III.11.95.

[11] Hopkins, op. cit., p. 68.

earth also.[1] It is to be noted that Kṛṣṇa is made to declare that 'respective profession (*Vidyā*) of each caste is their supreme god, is worshipful and adorable. . .'[2] Thus in agricultural economy the Brāhmaṇa theologians did find a solid material base for the new emerging cult of Vaiṣṇavism.[3]

The Vaiṣṇava faith evolved in the Epics and the Purāṇas takes substantially the elements of Vāsudeva-Kṛṣṇa creed. In this connection it seems worthwhile to take into account the relative change in the social status of the Andhaka-Vṛṣṇi and Sātvata-Bhoja septs of the Yādava tribe to which the legends connected with Vāsudeva-Kṛṣna owe their origin. The orthodox Vedic circles do not appear to have entertained[4] a high opinion about these people ever since the later Vedic times.[5] It is interesting to note that these people were inhabiting[6] the region of Mathura which was held as an ideal land of orthodox culture even by Manu.[7] But the same author places the Sātvatas to the class of the Vaiśya Vrātyas.[8] The *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*[9] describes these people as agriculturists partly subsisting on pastoral economy. Quite contrary to this tradition of antipathy, the social position of these people appears to have been significantly improved.

The connection of the Nāgas with the Bhāgavata deities is also intimate. But the symbolic function of nāga in the sense of sėrpent is so much interfused in the Epic-Purāṇic accounts that at least the various Vaiṣṇavite myths cannot be taken as frankly showing their relations with the nāga, the proto-Indian people.[10]

The political importance of the Andhak-Vṛṣṇi tribal republic must have made its own contribution to improve their social status. However, the socio-cultural importance of these septs of the Yādava tribe is more pronounced in the legendary traditions and religious accounts. Yudhiṣṭhira is presented as performing adorations of the heroes Sātyaki, Balarāma, Kṛṣṇa, Pradyumna etc. belonging to the Vṛṣṇi clan.[11] In the Epic *Mahābhārata* and the Purāṇas they are described as related to the rulers of Kṣatriya families. The *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* elaborates[12] the genealogy of the Yādavas, Sātvatas, and Bhojas. In the cultural life of the times their importance must have been significantly felt, which was responsible for ascribing them a dominant role even in the religious literature. Besides the emergence of Vṛṣṇi heroes Kṛṣṇa, Balarāma, Pradyumna etc. as the deities of the

[1]Prthivī Padmamucyate, *Mbh.*, XII.176. 36(b).
[2]*HV. P.*, II.16.2-4; *Viṣ. P.*, V.X.25-30.
[3]Gonda, op. cit., pp. 14-15.
[4]*Mbh.*, Droṇa Parva, 184.15.
[5]see *supra*, p. 31.
[6]*Viṣ. P.*, V, Ch. 25 and Ch. 10.
[7]see *infra*, Ch. 5.
[8]*Manu*, X.23.
[9]V. Ch. 25 and ibid, V. Ch. 10.
[10]Jaiswal, Suvira, *ODV*, pp. 52, 56-8.
[11]*Mbh.*, III.118.20ff.
[12]*Viṣ. P.*, IV. Ch. 11-14.

Neo-Orthodox fold, the typical rite known as Sātvata Vidhi became so greatly important that it formed the core of the tenets evolved around Viṣṇu and Nārāyaṇa. The supreme need felt by the theologians to elaborate this rite of the Sātvatas appears to be largely responsible for the composition of the *Nārāyaṇīya* section of *Mahābhārata*. The Sātvata rite gained so much significance in the Neo-Orthodox creed that the term 'Sātvata' is construed by the authors as derived from 'Sattva,' i.e., 'virtuous.'[1]

The increasing importance of these people in the cultural life of our times must have been felt due to the ascendancy of Vāsudeva-Kṛṣṇa worship in the Neo-Orthodox faith. But the emergence of Bhāgavatism together with these people among whom this creed took its birth, in turn, appears to have been brought about by the socio-economic transformations taking place ever since the later Vedic times. Its accummulated momentum exerted enough pressure on the orthodox Vedic faith all through the period of our study. In fact the expansion of advanced agriculture, with which these Yādava people were intimately connected, led to their ascendancy in the cultural life consequently making their creed dominantly placed in the Epic-Purāṇic theology.

The Brāhmaṇas were closely connected with the process which transformed their deities into great gods and raised the position of these people in social life. At one place in the 'Sānti Parva'[2] in a subtle philosophical plane the Vipras (Brāhmaṇas) are identified with Saṅkarṣaṇa. His act of Brāhmanicide[3] reminds us of the similar act of Indra in regard to Vṛtra. Its real import may be quite different from showing antipathy to the Brāhmaṇas. One of the motives of this legend of Saṅkarṣaṇa's Brāhmaṇicide appears to be the attempt at popularizing the newly instituted practice of pilgrimage[4] by illustrating the occasion and reason which oblige one to perform it. The feast to the Brāhmaṇas formed[5] part and parcel of the 'giriyajña' rite of the Yādavas. Many a Vedic ṛṣis are frequently associated with the Sātvata Vidhi (rite) and Bhāgavata tenets. Akrura the uncle of Kṛṣṇa, himself a Brāhmaṇa known as Candra in his previous life, is depicted as a disciple and son-in-law of Deva Śarmā of Atri gotra.[6] An inscription[7] of the 5th century AD depicts a Sātvata ācārya Yaśastrāta of Gautama gotra who is addressed as āryasātvata. He is described as connected with the idol workship of Vaiṣṇava sect. It indicates that the Sātvata ācāryas or priests were emulating Brāhmanic ways and were also adopting the gotras of the Brāhmaṇas. Besides this process, the phenomenon of the Brāhmaṇas taking up the job of ministering to the temple dedicated to

[1] *Mbh.*, XIII.328.13.
[2] *Mbh.*, XII.332.15-16.
[3] *Bhag. P.*, X.78.21ff.
[4] ibid, X.78.32-33; ibid, Chs. 78-79.
[5] *Viṣ. P.*, V. Ch. 10.
[6] Sharma, Rana Pasad, *Pauranik Kosha*, Varanasi, Samb. 2028, p. 7.
[7] Fleet, *CII*, III, no. 67, pp. 270-71.

the Sātvata or Bhāgavata deities must have been quite common. Such Brāhmaṇas, could easily get the appellation 'Sātvata' for, even as late as the 11th or 12th Century AD the subsistence by serving as temple-priest was regarded to be the typical vocation of the Sātvatas.[1] As a matter of fact, the emergence of the composite Vaiṣnavism was making significant changes in the structure of the Brāhmaṇa class, consequential to widening the sphere of influence of the Brāhmaṇa-priests, especially in those sections of the society which were gaining social and economic importance in our times.

Ritual Integration in Vaiṣṇavism

Despite the sacrificial character of the Vedic Viṣṇu, Epic-Purāṇic Vaiṣṇavism neither seeks to revalorize Vedic sacrifices involving animal killing nor enlists into its texture bloody tribal rites although most of his avatāras emerge from the primitive strata. The change in the ritual character brought about by the triumph of agriculture is more pronounced in Vaiṣṇavism. Although simpler rituals were sorted out from the aboriginal religious practices, they were quite in consonance with the Upaniṣadic Upāsanā and Bhakti which became dominant in Bhāgavatism.

The stuff laid down[2] to be offered by the followers of the Vedas are honey, curd, milk, and flesh, which betray pastoral and archaic character of the Vedic ritual. The *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* (1.6.21ff.) recommends the use of fourteen types of grains like rice, barley, cereals, sesamum, maze etc. as offerings in Yajña. The Śrāddha rite in the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*[3] retains the Vedic custom of the use of flesh of diverse kinds of animals, but the satisfaction accruing to the manes therefrom is rated lower in comparison to the satisfaction from offering of grain etc. From the later Vedic times onwards the tarpaṇa ceremony becomes progressively integrative of diverse social elements—divine and non-divine like Prajāpati, ancestors, preceptors, Asuras, Yakṣas, Nāgas Gandharvas, Rākṣasas, Guhyakas etc. Even Nārāyaṇa of the later Vedic period becomes a deity in Śrāddha ceremony and sheds off much of his sacrificial character, perhaps on account of the Upaniṣadic influence on his attributes and his association with Bhāgavatism. The materials recommended for Śrāddha rite are sesamum, māsa, rice, yavas, water, roots and fruits, but the manes are extremely gratified by food that is mixed with clarified butter.[4] Sesamum acquires great importance in the Śrāddha rites. It should be scattered at doors of the place of rite and on the altar[5] and should be mixed with the water meant for offering.[6] The importance of sesamum oil for the lamp to be used in worship is rated low

[1]Govindarāja on *Manu*, X.23.
[2]*Viṣ. Sm.*, XXX.38.
[3]III.16.1-3; *Manu*, III.123, 269-72.
[4]*Manu*, III.267; *Yāj.*, 1.25.8; *Vāyu P.*, 83.3; see also *ĀDS.*, II.7.16.22-24.
[5]*BDS*, II.88; *Nārada Purāṇa* (Pūrvārdha), 28.36.
[6]*Viṣ. P.*, III-11.26-38.

in comparison with that of clarified butter.[1] It is suggested that sesamum was known to the pre-Vedic Indus people.[2] It may be safely said that its ritualistic use was a non-Vedic practice. The use of flesh in the Śrāddha rite may be on account of the primitive belief of the 'locus of life'[3] in blood and flesh, which revives the fecundity destroyed by the impurities of death. The substitution of sesamum for flesh in the Śrāddha or in other rites[4] betrays the same belief in fertility attached to it. It is held by Crooke that 'the old ritual directs that all who return from a funeral must touch the liṅgam, fire, cow-dung, a grain of barley, a grain of sesamum and water—all being as Gubernatis says, 'symbols of that fecundity which after the contact with a corpse might have destroyed.'[5] According to Varāhamihira also, flesh and sesamum[6] are the articles granting fertility to the soil and their use in agricultural ritual is suggested in *Bṛhat Saṃhitā* (LV.17-18). Sesamum makes the asuras and evil spirits run away.[7] The traditional views on the articles of offerings connect the Vedic rituals more with the pastoral life. According to the *Viṣṇu smṛti* (XXX.34-38) the persons studying Ṛk, Sāma, Yajuh and Atharva Vedas use to feed their manes respectively with clarified butter, honey, milk and meat while those studying the Purāṇas, Itihāsa, Vedāṅgas and sacred law-books fed them with rice. The use of spirituous liquor, honey, flesh, fish, sesamum, and cooked rice seem to have emerged from the primitive strata for they are held as non-Vedic elements and introduced by the deceitful.[8] The injunction that Viṣṇu is to be worshipped in Yajña with rice cooked in milk (*Payasa*) may suggest his earlier connection with both the pastoral and agricultural social circles.[9] The agricultural attributes of Viṣṇu seem to be formulated through his identification with the Vāsudeva creed. Most of the vyūhas emanating from Vāsudeva give subtle hints of vegetational phases, for example, Saṅkarṣaṇa standing for ploughing, Pradyumna for sprouting (of seed), and Aniruddha for unabated growth of the plant. In more than one myth the attributes of Vāsudeva-Viṣṇu-Nārāyaṇa are elaborated as acts of creation akin to the vegetational cycle.

Besides the influences of the agricultural economy, the increased contact with primitive society also brought about changes in the structure of the orthodox rituals. The offering of wild fruits and grains had been a primitive practice. The Saoras in modern times make offerings of mangoes,

[1] *Mbh.*, BE. XIII. 98.49.
[2] Kosambi, *ISIH*, pp. 52, 129-30.
[3] Crawford Howell Toy, *Introduction to the History of Religion*, Harvard Univ. Press, 1948, pp. 57, 60-61.
[4] *Bhairavayāmala*, vide Woodroffe, op. cit., p. 69.
[5] De Gubernatis, *Zoological Mythology*, I, p. 49; vide Crooke, *Popular Religion and Folklore of Northern India*, II, p. 58; *Manu*, III.77.63.
[6] Gonda, op. cit., p. 14.
[7] *Yaj.*, I.234; *Kūrma P.*, II.22.18; *Viṣ. P.*, III.16.14; *Mbh.*, XII. 101.61; cf. *VSaṃ.*, II.241.
[8] *Mbh.*, XII.257.9-10; BE. XII.265.9-10.
[9] *Mbh.*, XII.257.10.

pulse, cucumber or sweet potato, rice-grains and tobacco.[1] It is described in the *Rāmāyaṇa*[2] that every home has its Gṛhadevatā worshipped with incense and lamps.[3] The worship of deities with leaves, flowers, fruits and water is exerted in the *Gītā*.[4] The use of such articles in offerings is held to be a non-Aryan practice adopted from the Draviḍian or Austric ethnic strata.[5] The amalgamation of primitive elements in the orthodox rituals are found in *Manu*[6] also, which recommends the use of jungle fruits, leaves, and flowers, in the Vedic Pañcayajña to be undertaken by the Vānaprasthas, who are enjoined upon to keep the Vedic fire with them. The ritual use of flowers, fruits, incense etc. seem to be originally connected with the worship of the deities of non-Vedic description which are increasingly appropriated by the authors of our age for the image worship in Neo-Orthodoxy. In the *Mahābhārata*,[7] the great demon-priest Śukrācārya lays down that the appearance of flowers pleases the Rākṣasas while it pleases Nāgas as food. The flowers of the lotus, the tulsī etc. are pleasing to gods.[8] "The agaru incense is best for Yakṣas, Rākṣasas, and serpents.[9] The Sallakīya incense, hateful to the gods, is the favourite of Daitya demons; but gods, dānavas, and Bhūtas are all pleased with the incense made of deodār pine and vatica robusta."[10] The use of such articles pre-supposes the worship of personified deities which at times seems to have been taken to replace the Vedic rites for women, who, disqualified for the same, are to use flowers in worship.[11] Besides, in order to extend the base of the Vaiṣṇava sect, the theologian introduced the simpler hymn of twelve syllables, i.e., 'Om Namo Bhagavate Vāsudevāya,' which grants supreme goal of life both to the spiritually elevated ascetics and the Śūdras.[12] The need of enlisting the masses in the orthodox fold who were subsisting on the low economic level, led to the adoption of the primitive deities and spirits in the neo-Vedic sects which, in turn, introduced the use of liquor, meat, brandy, sesamum, sugar[13] etc. in their ritual worship. The origin of such rituals from the primitive strata is proved by the fact that the village and temple priests are disqualified for the

[1]Elwin, *The Religion of Indian Tribe*, p. 194.
[2]V.5.27f.
[3]cf. *Mbh.*, XIII.101.58-59, 60-61.
[4]IX.26.
[5]Sudhakar Chattopadhyaya, *Evolution of Hindu Sects*, Delhi, p. 7; cf. Gonda, op. cit., p. 5.
[6]VI, 4-5.
[7]*Mbh.*, XIII.101.34.
[8]ibid, BE. XIII.98.28.
[9]ibid, IX.11.45; *Rāmāy.*, V.9.28.
[10]Hopkins, *EM*, p. 69; see also *Mbh.*, XIII.101.37.f.
[11]*Mbh.*, XIII.146.46.
[12]*Vis. P.*, I. Ch. 6; *Vaikhānasa Gṛhya Sūtra* vide *Vaikhānasa Smārta Sūtra*, IV.12.
[13]Hopkins, *EM*, p. 68.

Śrāddha ceremony[1] although this rite had itself changed to a considerable extent.[2] Further, the identification of Viṣṇu with the Bhāgavata deities gave it a popular sectarian shape and secured the patronage of the Anddhaka, Vṛṣni, Bhoja, and Sātvata septs of Yādava[3] race to the Neo-Orthodoxy, but the orgiastic tribal rituals had to be adopted by the theologians' which in refined form, became the sport of Kṛṣṇa.[4] The increasing need of patronage from the lower social strata is reflected in the provision that the high-born Brāhmaṇas well-versed in the Vedas were to install the image of the gods along with the images of Piśācas, Rākṣasas, Bhūtas as their accessories.[5] The integration of the non-Vedic ritual elements in the Vaiṣṇava sect was co-related with the attempt at enlisting the patronage of the primitive people.

Socialization of the Orthodox Cultural Values through Vaiṣṇavism

Despite the interchangeable attributes and functions of the great sectarian deities, Viṣṇu is dominated by the rājasika and sāttvika (virtuous) qualities,[6] signifying the élite's cultural ethos, while Rudra-Śiva is overwhelmingly tāmasika.[7] Vedic Viṣṇu's sacrificial character did not prove a deterrent factor in making him largely a non-violent god, presenting an imposing and luxurious social environment. No doubt in his pervasive character he is, like Śiva, transformed into all big and small objects, but his incarnations in human forms are neatly developed around great personages, political as well as religious, so much so that every great king or sage represents him.[8] Not only that, but Viṣṇu is also made out to be a political self as Virāṭ, Svarāṭ, and Samrāṭ.[9] The élite's aspirations are served also by relating Lakṣmī, the goddess of wealth, with him as his consort in an elaborated category of his attributes. In relation to Viṣṇu's forms of Justice, Knowledge, Dharma, Bhūdhara (mountain or king), Yajña, Puroḍāśa, Kubera etc. She becomes[10] Nīti (Law), intelligence, good action (or rituals), earth, honorarium, oblation (of clarified butter, . . . ṛddhi (prosperity) respectively. In the churning of the ocean he is even deceitful in helping gods against demons.[11] He is, like Puruṣa of the Vedas, the Creator of the four Varṇas.[12] He symbolises Vedic sacrifices and Vedas

[1] *Viṣ. P.*, III.15.6-8
[2] ibid, III.16.1-16.
[3] *Mbh.*, I.217.18-19; ibid, II.2.30.
[4] Loomis, *Socio-Economic Change and the Religious Factor in India*, p. 28; cf. Ghurye, *Gods and Men*, p. 175.
[5] *Mat. P.*, *Gurumandal Series*, no. XIII, 1954, Chs. 265, 263-64, 266.
[6] *Viṣ. P.*, I.2.61-62.
[7] ibid, 1.2.63.
[8] *Bhāg. P.*, II.45.42-44.
[9] *Viṣ. P.*, I.12.59.
[10] ibid, I.8.18-24.
[11] *Viṣ. P.*, I. ch. 9.
[12] ibid, I.12.63-64.

themselves.[1] The Varṇa consideration appears in a strange way in propagation of the faith. It is exhorted[2] that Vaiṣṇava faith should be preached to the Brāhmaṇas by a Brāhmaṇa, to Kṣatriya by a Kṣatriya, to Vaiśyas by a Vaiśya and to Śūdras by a Śūdra. This provision aims at making the caste structure exclusive but at the same time the popularization of the faith is made the responsibility of all the four Varṇas showing conservatism and liberalism, typically balanced in the missionary zeal of Neo-Orthodoxy. Besides, Viṣṇu as Nārāyaṇa, is the performer of the Vedic sacrifices involving fabulous honorarium.[3] He undertakes tīrtha also.[4] He is presented as addressed by Nārada with many Brāhmaṇical traits like Brāhmaṇa-Purohita, Pañcayajña, Kauśika, Brāhmaṇa in form, amiable to the Brāhmaṇas etc.[5] Kṛṣṇa too advised Yudhiṣṭhira to perform Rājasūyayajña[6] and he takes the form of a Brāhmaṇa.[7] By presenting the great god Kṛṣṇa, obeying Nanda only because he is father to him, the authors sought to reinforce the institution of family.[8] Again, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma undergo name-giving ceremonies and wear the sacred thread.[9] Both lead a Brahmacārī's life studying Vedic lore[10] and pay honorarium to the teacher.[11]

The Proselytizing Technique of the Neo-Orthodoxy

We have seen in the previous chapter that Neo-Orthodoxy was marked with a cryptic proselytizing zeal. Here we propose to see the devices which were formulated by the theologians to get the Vaiṣṇava sect patronised by the lower strata of the people, especially the tribal and semi-tribal people. We have already seen that Vaiṣṇavism is rendered accessible to the Śūdras and peasantry.[12] Only a few instances suffice our purpose in getting into the motive and technique of propagation of the sect devised by the Brāhmaṇas of our times.

We find that through Vaiṣnavism the theologians would make the non-Vedic people not only submissive to political power, but also settle them down within the pale of orthodox culture and at the same time enlist their patronage for the cult. In the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*[13] it is said that some Brāhmaṇas killed the arrogant king Vena who neglected both Viṣṇu and

[1] *Vis. P.*, I.12.61-62; *Mbh.*, XIII.187.13.
[2] ibid, XIII.203.9; also BE. XII.210.11-12.
[3] *Mbh.*, III.187.8.
[4] ibid, III.65.38ff.
[5] ibid, XII. Ch. 325.
[6] ibid, II. Ch. 14; *HV. P.*, II.32.62-63.
[7] *Mbh.*, II. Ch. 18.
[8] *HV. P.*, II. Ch. 4.
[9] ibid, II.6.2; ibid, II.8.5.
[10] *HV. P.*, II.33.3-6.
[11] ibid, II.33.10-24.
[12] *supra*, pp. 68-71.
[13] I. Ch. 13.

the Brāhmaṇas. But, as a great chaos ensued due to the absence of a king, they produced a person of proto-Indian description to overcome the social disorder and advised him to settle down[1] (*niṣīd*). The people called Niṣāda flourishing in the Vindhyan region are said to be his progeny. The person created by the Brāhmaṇas did away with the sins committed by Vena which implied that he and his progeny honoured Viṣṇu and the Brāhmaṇas. The story apparently seeks to entrench the orthodox systems and values like monarchical set-up, sacrifice and authority of the Brāhmaṇas which, it is said, grant fabulous prosperity to the people. Further, the story[2] which presents the despised people like Sūtas and Māgadhas as being advised by the Brāhmaṇas to praise Pṛthu by laudatory songs, who is equated with Viṣṇu and is described as upholding dharma, yajña and Brāhmanic cause, clearly shows Brāhmaṇas' desire for political favour in their bid to secure the patronage of the masses. The story of Prahlāda, a devotee of Viṣṇu contrasting the demonic traits of his father, serves the same purpose. Again Viṣṇu, in the form of Indra while expounding religion to Māndhātā, lays down the duties for the foreign and indigenous tribes like Greeks, Kirātas, Gāndharas, Cīnas, Śabaras, Barbaras, Śakas, Tuṣāras, Kaṅkas, Pahlavas, Āndhras, Madrakas, Pauṇḍras, Pulindas, Rameṭhas, and Kambojas which comprise many a Neo-Orthodox cultural obligations.[3]

The theologians attempt to socializing the élite's cultural values and to get extensive patronage for themselves must have at times achieved an easy success. Despite the strong tribal bonds, the tribal people automatically adopt the cultural ideas and practices of the higher culture. This tendency takes its origin in the weak economic position of such societies. Even in modern times, the Saoras (the representatives of the ancient Śabaras)[4] praise their deities describing them as kings, Kṣatriyas and Brāhmaṇas. The Saora gods inscribed on walls are attended by servants including potters and their wives. The current explanation of these potters is that they have come to sell pots to the gods, for they, being Hindus, have to use fresh pots for every meal.'[5]

2. Śaivism: Deity, Rituals and Patrons

Śiva and Sacrifice

The authors of our age had branded various acts of material pursuit like war,[6] agricultural production (Sītā Yajña) etc. and honouring guests as Yajña, giving them religious sanction but, at the same time, bringing such social acts under religious control which helped in patterning social

[1] *Vāyu P.*, 21.43ff.
[2] *Viṣ. P.*, I. Ch. 13.
[3] *Mbh.*, XII.65.1-20.
[4] Elwin, op. cit., pp. 393, 463.
[5] Elwin, *The Tribal Arts of Middle India*, p. 198.
[6] *Mbh.*, XII.99.15ff.

relations. Like social acts, the groups and classes of the society are also symbolically represented in the religious action of the deities. In studying the socio-economic background of the patrons of Śaivism, an analysis of the attributes of Śiva helps considerably. Rudra presents a better ritual status in the *Ṛgveda*[1] as he is identified with Agni and praised like other deities. Later on, his importance is felt largely on account of his destructive attributes. His lean sacrificial share like handful of straw[2] etc. betrays his increasing connection with the lower strata of people. While other gods went to heaven[3] by means of sacrifice, Rudra remained on the earth. His name Rudra[4] is explained as signifying weeping.[5] In the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* (IV.11.13) Rudra-Śiva is sought to be equated with Śūdra. In the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*[6] this great god is so dreadful that even the recitation of his actual name is forbidden.[7] The historical explanation of the steady lowering down of Rudra's ritual status may be traced in the social transformation of early times. With the formation of class structure, the worship of Rudra-Śiva must have come to be associated more and more with the lower social strata. It is well illustrated that even the defeated Āryans fell to the category of Śūdras,[8] who must have brought the Vedic religious practices to the popular strata. Besides, some sections of the Āryans, deviating from the orthodox fold, seem to have approximated their position to that of the Vrātyas who retained Rudra as their god "par excellence." The low ritual status of Rudra-Śiva becomes acute, on account of his connections with the proto-Indian people. Rudra, for whom human sacrifice[9] and special Soma-Raudra[10] and Śūlagava[11] rites were instituted and who functioned also as god of rain and vegetation, slips off in the Śatarudriya description to the heterodox social milieux. This phenomenon seems to be responsible for bringing about the dreadful primitive rites in the Śaivite sects, some of which may be reminiscent of the rite of skull-hunting with its symbolic lunar connections.[12] Rudra, who grew steadily as a sacrificial god in the Vedic times, is presented as hostile to sacrifice and the priestly class.[13] Though the orthodox values connected with Varṇa, āśrama, family, Yajña, Brāhmaṇas, sacred thread are attributed to Śiva

[1]I.27.10; IV.3.1.

[2]*Gobhila Gṛhya Sūtra*, I.8.18.

[3]*ŚBr.*, I.34.12; I.7.38.

[4]cf. Weber, *Indian Studies*, pp. 2, 19-22; Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, p. 78; Bhandarkar, *Vaiṣṇavism . . .*, pp. 103ff.

[5]*ŚBr.*, VI.1.3; *Kūrma P.*, 10.22ff.

[6]III.34.

[7]Keith, *RPVU*, II, pp. 145-46.

[8]Sharma, *Śūdras in Ancient India*, pp. 14, 26, 40.

[9]Yaduvamshi, *Shaivamata*, pp. 12, 44.

[10]*TSaṃ.*, II.2.10.

[11]*Mānava Gṛhya Sūtra*, II.5; *Āśv. Gṛ. Sūtra*, IV.10.

[12]Mircea Eliade, *Yoga: Immortality, and Freedom*, p. 300.

[13]*Mbh.*, BE. ch. 284; cf. *TMBr.*, XII.4.28.

also, they seem to be more aimed at counter-balancing the ferocious and objectionable elements of the Śaivite practices. It is no wonder that Vaiṣṇava rituals are estimated to be of Sāttvika (Virtuous) nature, while those of Śaivism as Rājsika, but when they involve animal and human sacrifice they are branded as tāmasika[1] (having darker qualities). Both these qualities of Raja and Tama are described as the attributes of Asuras,[2] whose religious practices are held as false and delusive.[3] The emergence of the proto-Indian elements in Śaivite rituals is proved by the fact that the Gaṇas of Śiva reflect the tradition of primitive cannibalism,[4] nay, in the Anuṣāsana Parva Śiva is presented as the eater of flesh and blood.[5]

Śaivite Rituals

The literature of our times shows a marked dichotomy between the theological concept of Rudra-Śiva and his sectarian ritual structure. Of the various Śaiva sects, the Pāśupata school was by far the most important one, although the Kāpālikas and Aghorīs were also emerging as definite sects towards the end of our period. The theistic attributes of Rudra-Śiva, developed as a philosophical concept in the *Atharvaśiras* and *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣads*, do find expression in the Epic and Purānic literature. But it seems that the revolting primitive rituals led to the categorization[6] of the Pāśupatas as Śrauta (Vedic) and Aśrauta or Laukika[7] (popular) ones. The Pāśupata rites mentioned in the Upaniṣads and *Mahābhārata* are well contrasted by rebellious Caryās of the Laukika school. The Nakulīśa-Pāśupata-darśana in the Mādhvācārya's *Sarvadarśana Saṃgraha* (14th Century AD), which is taken to be based on quite an old text *Pāśupata Sūtra*, found with the commentary of Rāśīkara of the Gupta period, gives a fair idea of the nature of popular Śaiva ritual reformulated by Lakulīśa in our times. In this rite some of the means of achieving perfection are besmearing of the various parts of the body with ashes . . . laughing, singing, dancing, making peculiar sounds with tongue and palate etc. The other practices include Krāthana, i.e., pretending signs of sleeping while really awake, convulsing movements of the joints as if under the attack of rheumatism; mandana, i.e., walking as if the legs were disabled, Śṛgāraṇa, i.e. making erotic gestures in the view of a young and beautiful woman; avitatkaraṇa, i.e., indulging in unsocial, despicable and insane acts; and avitat-bhāṣaṇa, i.e., speaking absurd and senseless words.[8] Such sorts of rites closely resembles the practices of the Ājīvikas performed by Gosāla

[1] *Kālikā Purāṇa*, 65.47-49ff; *Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa*, 94.96.
[2] *Mbh.*, XII.209.18.
[3] *Gitā*, IX.12-13.
[4] *Mbh.*, X.7.44.
[5] Keith, *RPVU*, I, pp. 146ff; *Mbh.*, XIII.146.7.
[6] Karmarkar, op. cit., p. 232.
[7] *Kūrma P.*, II.183.88ff.
[8] *Sarvadarśana Saṃgraha*, ed. U. S. Sharma Rishi, Varanasi, 1964, pp. 310ff.

which met the condemnation of the Buddha.[1] Of the secondary religious practices of the Pāśupatas, the eating of food left over by others seems to assume more importance as it resembles Rudra-Śiva's position in the orthodox rite whose share is the remnant of the sacrifice. The above-mentioned Pāśupata practices[2] are referred to in the *Mahābhārata* also, wherein Śiva is presented as indulging in laughing, singing, dancing, producing queer musical sounds, limping, yawning, weeping, talking as a lunatic.[3] He plays with the daughters of ṛṣis and at times becomes naked.[4] But the higher cultural level of the élite's circle could hardly accomodate some of these practices. Strong detestation of some of the Śiva's attributes and ritual practices is shown by the authors of our age in which the erotic aspect of his performances is made a special point of condemnation.[5] The commentator of Pāśupata Śutra too rates these acts as opposed to those of the Brāhmaṇas.[6] The *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* (IV.2.14-15) also elaborates the same sort of Pāśupata rites in almost identical terms. It is to be noted that in the *Vāyu Purāṇa* (Ch. XXIII) Śiva is presented to have declared that he will enter a dead body thrown in a cemetery by means of yogic power and will become Lakulīśa. It can very well be taken that the belief in the yogic power plays a key-role in the formulation of the various Śaivite rituals. This shows intimate connection of Śaiva sects with the primitive Shamanism.[7] The emergence of primitive rites in the Śaiva sects is proved by the reflections of cannibalistic elements in Śaiva rituals. This led to the association of Śiva and his sectaries with the cemeteries. The fact cannot be denied that the custom of human sacrifice among the primitives was based on the belief of fertility derived from the life principle seen in blood, as illustrated by the practice among the Khondas[8] and Saoras[9] who take the earth as crying for blood. The association of human skulls and dead-bodies with the Śaiva rituals seem also to hint at its connection with cannibalistic people. The Kirātas and Pāṇis among whom Śiva was especially worshipped, are described as eaters of human flesh.[10] Despite the fact that Śiva as one of the great deities of orthodoxy takes the attributes of a Supreme god, the violent rites of the Kāpālikas, Lakulīśas, Pāśupatas, etc. are expressly said to be meant for the people who

[1]*Maj. Nik.*, II; *Tevijjāvacha gottasutta*; cf. Banerjea, *Purāṇic and Tāntric Religion*, Calcutta, p. 93.

[2]*Mah.*, BE. XIII.14.156.

[3]*Mbh.*, BE. XIII.14.157.

[4]ibid, XIII.14.161.

[5]*Mat. P.*, 155.6ff; *Brahma Purāṇa*, 24.35ff.

[6]brāhmaṇakarmaviruddham karma, *Pāśupata Sūtra*, no. 147, Trivandrum Sanskrit Series, III, pp. 12ff.

[7]Eliade, *Yoga: Immortality and Freedom*, pp. 297, 338.

[8]ibid, p. 306.

[9]Elwin, op. cit., p. 188.

[10]*Bhāg. P.*, V. 9. 8ff.; *ERE*, VI, p. 850; Crooke, op. cit., II, p. 168.

were outside the Vedic pale[1] and their texts are branded as moha-śāstra (treatises of delusion). But the Brāhmanized Śrauta Pāśupata is held to be the essence of the Vedas.[2]

In our period the Kāpālikas started emerging as a vigorous sect which later on presented an extreme form of Śaiva rites entailing the use of blood and skulls.[3] It is held that they attain highest bliss by concentrating on the supreme soul seated on the female organ,[4] which betrays the orgiastic character of their rite. In regard to the factors leading to the emergence of these sects, a historical explanation can be sought in the socio-economic level of the lower strata of people who lived in the most primitive conditions wherein the role of magic was in the least disturbed by the technical advancement of higher culture. The society dominated by the primitive shamans definitely provided to the Brāhmaṇa-priest a situation to play a role bringing about acculturation of these people. But the economic system of the higher culture, based on the class structure as it was, seems to have limited the scope of the Brāhmaṇas' success is this direction. The socio-economic situation was hardly condusive to a complete change of the primitive attitude to life. The existence of various socio-economic levels within the same society can be taken as the factor which produced serious contradictions in the cultural components of the orthodox fold, reflected more conspicuously in the attributes of the orthodox deities and rituals evolved around them. In fact, primitive rituals as represented in the non-Vedic Pāśupata sect became a sort of instrument of protest against the élite's Varṇa economy and the culture having it as its base. Despite such social situations, the Brāhmaṇa theologians never desisted from transforming and modifying these sects and their rituals in order to accommodate them within the orthodox idealogies and ethical standard. The Kāpālikas originally showed violent elements in their rituals, but later on some sections of the sect came nearer to the orthodox religion. In the seventh Century the nephew of Cālukya Pulkeśin II granted a village near Igatpuri to the worshippers of Kapāleśvara.[5] Later on Śaṅkarācārya, as *Śāṅkaravijaya* would have us believe, met Kāpālikas at Ujjaini and their deities were equated by him with the orthodox gods.[6] But the Kāpālika's drinking of ceremonial liquor in the skulls of Brāhmaṇas[7] is difficult to explain. Whether this marks their anti-Brāhmaṇical attitude

[1]*Kūrma Purāṇa*, ed. Ramashankar Bhattacharya, Varanasi, 1967, I. XVI. 115-19.

[2]ibid, I. Ch. XVI; *Mbh.*, XII.337.69ff.

[3]*Bṛhatsaṃhitā*, 97.13-14, 22; *Kūrma P.*, XVI.119; Kṛṣṇamiśra, *Prabodhacandrodaya*, Bombay, 1935, pp. 112-66.

[4]Banerjea, op. cit., p. 97.

[5]Igetpuri Copper Plate of Nāgavardhana, *JBBRAS*, XIV, p. 26.

[6]Rao, Gopinath, *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, II, pp. 27f; cf. Bloomfield, *JAOS*, XLIV, pp. 203ff.

[7]Kṛṣṇamiśra, *Prabodhacandrodaya*, pp. 114ff; vide also Karmarkar, op. cit., p. 241.

or whether they accepted the Brāhmaṇa's skulls as containing extra-magical propensity for achieving their religious goal, cannot be ascertained. However, in the *Kūrma Purāṇa* the authority of the Veda is sought in the worship of the typical Kāpālika deity Bhairava, as his glory is said to be revealed in the Vedas. In spite of this fact some extremist sections of them must have been resented by the people up to the beginning of the medieval times, because they were driven from different regions and were obliged to migrate to Malwa and the countries of the Abhīras which are said to have been inhabited by the low class people.[1]

Thus we find that the formation of new Śaivite sects with violent rites, and the Brāhmaṇic attempt at transforming them to suit the orthodox aspiration, formed a parallel historical process in ancient India. No sooner one extreme sect was brought into the Vedic fold, its violent rituals were crystallized into other sectarian denominations. The later emergence of the Kālāmukhas, Aghorīs, Somasiddhāntins presents the same phenomenon. The revival of old rites through different sects seems to have been largely on account of the survival of primitive conditions of life.

The Patrons of Śaivism

The diverse and often contradictory attributes of Śiva like his mastery of Yoga, dance, and all kinds of arts,[2] his militant aspect, together with his socio-economic base in the primitive society, led him to be patronised by the ascetics, intellectuals, the military class and the lower strata of the society all alike. Most ascetic sects like Pāśupata, Śaiva-Bhāgavata, Kāpālika, Kālāmukha, Aghorīs etc. took their roots in Śaivism. The great literary personages like Pāṇini, Kālidāsa, Subandhu, Śūdraka, Bāṇa, Śrī Harṣa and Bhavabhūti derived inspiration from him. The Karamadanda Liṇga Stone Inscription of Kumāragupta (436 AD) suggests that 'the Brāhmaṇas of Ayodhyā were most probably Pāśupata clericals, well-versed in the sectarian rites and theological lore[3].' It is no wonder that the Brāhmaṇas of Kauśika, Gārgya, Kauruṣa and Maitreya gotras seem to be active in evolving the sectarian schools of the creed.[4] The Ekliṅgjī inscription[5] (971 AD) also connects the sect with Kauśika and Bhṛgu. As regards Śiva's patronage by the military section of the society, most Epic heroes and kings either worship him or, like Arjuna, Aśvatthāmā and Droṇa, derive weapons from him. Śiva's Gaṇas present unmistakably unique mercenary characteristics. It must have been one of the factors which led to the connection of Śiva with Vināyaka and Kārttikeya, god 'par excellence' of the militant Yaudheyas. The army of Porus carried the

[1]Sastri, 'The Lokāyatikas and the Kāpālikas,' *IHQ*, VII, p. 128.
[2]Bhattacharji, Sukumari, *Indian Theogony*, p. 110; *Mbh.*, BE. XII.284.143.
[3]Banerjea, op. cit., p. 99; Pandey, *Historical and Literary Inscriptions*, p. 82.
[4]Bühler, *EI*, I, pp. 211ff.
[5]*JBBRAS*, XXII, p. 151.

image of Herakles while marching against Alexander which is suggested[1] to be the image of Śiva. Among the foreign rulers Wema Khadphises,[2] Gondopharenes,[3] Maues,[4] and Huviṣka[5] patronised Śaivism. The Hūṇa chief Mihirakula also worshipped[6] Śiva.

The patronage of the indigenous kings and tribal chiefs to Śaivism is evidenced by coins, inscription, and the terra-cotta figurines. The coins of the Audumbara chiefs (3rd and 1st Centuries BC) Śivadāsa, Rudradāsa and Dharaghoṣa,[7] the Pāñcāla king Rudragupta,[8] and the coins of Kuniṇḍas,[9] bear many cultic emblems connected with Śaivism. The coins of Kumāragupta feeding peacock, the vehicle of Kārttikeya, may suggest his association with Śiva. The Talguṇḍa inscription records the worship of Śiva by the Sātavāhana king (Śātakarṇi) and the Kadamba king Kākusthavarman.[10] Some seals from Bhita[11] in Brāhmī of the Gupta period represent realistic liṅgam like the Gudimallam image.[12] Some of these seals depict Śiva with a bull, a crescent, a bow, an arrow and a mountain.[13] The seals from Nalanda belonging to royal personages and the village organisations also bear such cultic marks.[14] Despite overwhelming patronage of the Gupta kings to Vaiṣṇavism, Śaivism with its accessory deities steadily got the recognition of the kings and the bureaucrats. The names like Kumāragupta and Skandagupta connect them with Śaivism. Dedication of a cave to Śambhu is recorded in an inscription of Ujjaini. The Mathura Pillar inscription of Candragupta Vikramāditya records the installation of the image of Pāśupatācārya.[15] Vīrasena Śāba a minister of Candragupta II and Pṛthivīṣeṇa a minister of Kumāragupta were devotees of Śiva.[16] Harṣa, before embracing Buddhism, and his ancestors like Puṣpabhūti etc., were Śaivas. Under the Pallavas, Śaivism flourished in South India. The *Mattavilāsa Prahasana* mentions various Śaiva sects like Pāśupata, Kāpālika, Kālāmukha etc.

[1]Banerjea, op. cit., p. 89.
[2]Whitehead, *PMC*, I, Pl., XVIII, 38.
[3]Rapson, *JRAS*, I, pp. 385-86.
[4]Cunningham, *Coins of the Indo-Scythian and Kushāṇas*, p. 30.
[5]Banerjea, *DHI*, p. 121.
[6]Smith, *Catalogue of Coins in the Indian Museum*, I, p. 236, pl. XXV.5.
[7]Banerjea, *DHI*, p.118.
[8]Allan, op. cit., Pl. XXVII, nos. 1 and 2; Banerjea, *DHI*, p. 113.
[9]Banerjea, *DHI*, p. 118.
[10]Moraes, *The Kadambakula*, p. 7.
[11]Banerjea, *DHI*, pp. 113-14.
[12]Rice, *Mysore and Coorge Inscriptions*, p. 17.
[13]Banerjea, *DHI*, p. 184.
[14]ibid.
[15]*EI*, XXI, pp. 1-9.
[16]Fleet, *CII*, III, pp. 36 and 248.

The Brāhmaṇas' Ritual Connection with the Śūdras

Socio-Economic Background of the Patrons of Śaivism

Despite the Brāhmaṇic attempts at solidifying the Varṇa structure on a ritualistic plane, technically alineating the twice-borns from the lower social order, the search for the new lease of patronage from the non-Vedic social groups obliged the Brāhmaṇas to come into contact with the Śūdras and the primitive people. *The Maitrī Upaniṣad* (VII.8) describes that the persons who are worthy of heaven get associated with those who do not deserve it and perform sacrifices for them and such people even become the disciples of the Śūdras. In spite of the provision that Śūdra's food destroys Brahmavarcasa (divine splendour),[1] Brāhmaṇas in the Kali age are said to have ritual connections with the Śūdras.[2] Vāmācāra and Pāśupata rituals are performed by the Brāhmaṇas and Kṣatriyas[3] which is proved by the Karamadanda Liṅga Stone inscription of Kumāragupta. Another inscription of the beginning of the 7th Century AD tells us that the Atharvan Brāhmaṇas were associated with the Kāpālika sect.[4] The extreme Vāmācarī sectaries like Pāśupatas, Pañcarātras, and Tāntrikas are categorised by Amarasiṃgha[5] as Śūdras. However unpalatable to the puritan Brāhmaṇas, some Brāhmaṇa priests, devoid of the means of livelihood, must have sought their subsistence from the lower social strata. The improved economic position of the Śūdras in the Gupta times,[6] exerting pressure for their comparatively better ritual status,[7] must have rendered the process of securing this patronage more easier. This economic motivation of the Brāhmaṇas presupposes somewhat increased legal protection of the Śūdras so that they are materially competent enough to engage the Brāhmaṇa-priests. In the *Mahābhārata*[8] the Śūdras are enjoined upon to make gifts of foodgrain to the Brāhmaṇas. The texts of our times indicate that the Śūdras' share in property has become comparatively better in our period. According to the *Viṣṇu Smṛti* (XVIII.32), a Śūdra who is the only son of a father of twice-born caste, shall inherit one half of his property. Tax-paying Śūdras like blacksmith, leather-workers, weavers, and barbers are recorded in a Pallava inscription.[9] They must have been economically well-to-do to undertake the performance of rituals. Further, the members of barber's and leather-worker's families, attaining high

[1] *Mbh.*, XII.37.21; ibid, BE. XII.36.27ff.

[2] *Vāyu P.*, Ch. 58; *Brahmāṇḍa P.*, II.31.59, 60; *Kūrma P.*, I, Chs. 29 and 30; *Mat. P.*, 143.39.

[3] *Kūrma P.*, I, 29.25.

[4] *CII*, III, no. 80, pp. 289-90.

[5] *Amarakośa*, Khaṇḍa II, Śūdravarga; Barth, op. cit., p. 163; Muir, OST, IV, p. 377.

[6] Sharma, *Śūdras in Ancient India*, pp. 177, 226-235; Jain, *Labour in Ancient India*, pp. 19-20.

[7] see *infra*, Ch. VI. 'Change in the position of Śūdras.'

[8] XIII.113.17.

[9] *EI*, XXIV, no. 42, Pt. II, pp. 18-19.

military ranks, should have enjoyed better economic and ritual status.[1] The *Mahābhārata* shows that the Brāhmaṇas served[2] the common folk as temple-priests and astrologers.

The temple-priests, or even the Śrauta priests, performing domestic rituals, could hardly remain isolated from popular religions and these priests were instrumental in formulating a synthetic ritual[3] with the result that in the Gṛhya Sūtras the hymns to be recited in the worship of Mahākālī, Mahāyoginī, called as Durgā and Mahā-Pṛthivī, the consort of Śiva, are deliberately taken from the Vedic texts, even though, being connected with fire and water, these hymns hardly suit the new context.[4] Such composite rituals were also instituted in connection with agricultural activities of ploughing, threshing etc.[5] Further, the acts of digging of wells and tanks, planting gardens etc. required a priest well-versed in the Vedic lore.[6] Besides the problem of securing patronage, the very necessity of the services of the people of lower vocations for the upper classes must have been responsible for restructuring the orthodox rituals. The need of the services of the carpenter in Vedic sacrifices who prepared wooden vessels, carts, mats, sacrificial staff[7] etc. seems to have contributed to the institution of the provision that 'the hand of a cook or other artisan, things exposed for sale and a shop . . . food given to a Brāhmaṇa (except by Śūdras) and all manufactories or mines (of sugar, salt etc. but not distilleries of spirituous liquors) are always pure."[8]

The Brāhmaṇas are enjoined upon to take shelter into Īśāna[9] (Maheśvāra) who was already a popular deity to whom offerings were to be made in a place infested by snakes, in a river . . . at a cross way . . . at sacred trees, at a place of sacrifice[10] and so on. Still earlier, the most heterogenous social sections which patronised Śaiva worship are recorded in the Śatarudriya hymn of Yajurveda wherein Rudra is invoked as 'to you the carpenter, to you the chariot-makers, to you the potters, and to you black-smith, to you the Niṣādas and to you Pañjasthas, to you the hunters, to you the lord of rogues, to you the lord of plunderers, to you the lord of stealers.[11] . . . " This hymn clearly shows that the people engaged in vocations of the Śūdras, together with the non-conformist primitive sections, formed the bulk of the Śaiva patrons. Despite great changes in Śiva's attributes

[1] *Mṛcchakaṭika*, VI.22-23.
[2] *Mbh.*, BE.XIII.135.11; *Manu*, III.152-3.
[3] Hopkins, *The Religious Life of Man, The Hindu Religious Tradition*, p. 27.
[4] *Baudh. Gṛ. Sutra*, III.3.3.
[5] Jain, *Labour in Ancient India*, p. 38.
[6] *Mat. P.*, Ch. 255.
[7] *BDS*, XX.13-14.
[8] *Viṣ. Sm.*, XXIII.48.
[9] *Kūrma P.*, I.28.37.
[10] *Hiraṇyakeśin Gṛhya Sutra*, I.16.8ff.
[11] *VSaṃ.*, XVI.1-66; *TSaṃ.*, IV.5.1ff.

his connection with tribal and semi-tribal people is traceable in the works of our age. The *Mahābhārata*[1] describes Śiva as taking forms of savage and non-Vedic people like Piśacas, Kirātas, Śabaras, Yakṣas, Rākṣasas, snakes (Nāgas), Daityas, Dānavas and the dwellers of netherlands. The Purāṇas make Śiva connected with the tribes like Kilakas, Kikaṭas[2] (of Magadha), Kaivartas, Kirātas, and Mahāvyādhas.[3] Further, the association of Śiva with the heterogeneous people, brought about totemic elements in Śiva's attributes. We find that Śiva is presented as changing his form into conch-shell, tortoise, fish,[4] tiger, lion, deer, bear, owl, dog, jackal, goose, peacock, . . , vulture, cow, elephant, horse, camel, donkey, goat[5] etc. At another place[6] the Gaṇas of Śiva are described as having such animal-like attributes. The animals were objects of worship because they are said[7] to be the God of gods of all the three worlds. It is interesting to note that these cannibalistic Gaṇas are said to have propitiated Śiva by their studies of Vedas, celibacy, austerity and control over senses.[8] The oft-cited passage of the Buddhist Niddesa[9] clearly describes the totemic worship of bull, elephants, horse, cow, dog, crow, nāgas, goose etc. The above mentioned passages of the *Mahābhārata* suggest that the worship of such animals and objects were loosely connected with Śiva. The Vedic Rudra as lord of animals must have provided a readymade concept to make him the lord of these totemic animals ultimately representing the religious practices of the heterogenous primitives. The existence of the totemic tribes can be traced from various sources. The Sibae (Siboi=Sibis) tribe of the North-western region is described by Curtius and Diodorus as worshipping the bull and wearing the skin of elephants, or tiger, or lion.[10] Śiva is at times described as wearing such hides in the literature of our times.[11] Fish, elevated as one of the incarnatory forms of Viṣṇu, was an object of worship in the Matsya country (Rajashthan),[12] as is proved by archaeological[13] evidence also. The Vānaras in Rāma's army are held to have been Arsi (monkey) sept of the Saoras (Śabaras).[14] Hanumāna as a symbol on Arjuna's standard gives a totemic importance to ape.'[15] Some sections of

[1]BE. XII.14.141-2.
[2]*Skanda Purāṇa, Avantikṣetra*, 63.124.
[3]*Liṅga Purāṇa* Pūrvabhāga, 96.8.
[4]*Skanda Puraṇa*, (Māheśvara Khaṇḍa), Ch. 17.
[5]*Mbh.*, BE. XIII.14.142-47.
[6]*Mbh.*, X.7.16-24. [7]ibid, X.7.41.
[8]ibid, X.7.45-46.
[9]Bhandarkar, *Vaṣṇavism, Śaivism* etc., p. 3.
[10]Banerjea, *Purāṇic and Tantric Religion*, p. 71.
[11]Bhattacharji, Sukumari, op. cit., pp. 110, 113.
[12]*Viṣṇudharmottara Purāṇa*, Khaṇḍa III.121.3.
[13]Banerjea, *DHI*, p. 413; *Excavation at Rairh*, Arch. Dept., Jaipur, p. 28; Majumdar, *Races and Culture of India*, p. 348.
[14]Ramdas, *JBBRS*, XII, 1926, pp. 41ff.
[15]*Mbh.*, VII.129.139; see also Buchanan, *Eastern India*, I, p. 467; Dalton, *Descriptive Ethnology*, p. 147; vide Crooke, op. cit., I, 1968, p. 86.

Bhils, Gonds and Santhals worship tiger.[1] Jāmbavanta, the king of bears (Vidyādharas) seems to signify the bear of totemic import.[2] Haṃsa,[3] one of the incarnatory forms of Viṣṇu, is the name of one of the four tribes living outside India. The cow has been a totemic element in pastoral tribes.[4] The serpent was a overwhelmingly popular totemic object of worship.[5] But on account of increasing contacts with the advanced culture, these primitive people gave up their older totemic identities. Referring to the modern inhabitants of the Gangetic Valley, Crooke[6] observes that under 'the pressure of higher culture the kindred of the Swan, turtle, or parrot have preferred to call themselves Kanaujia or men of Kanauj, Sarwariya or residents beyond the river Sarju or Raghuvamsi or Bhriguvamsi, some ancient king or sage."[7] Thus we find that the attempts of the theologians of our times to establish these people within the Vedic pale have left their marks in the religious history of the Neo-Orthodoxy.

3. Śaktism: Deity and Ritual

Socio-Economic Level of its Patronage

The sources of our period give an idea of the steady emergence of female worship. The humble position of the goddesses like Uṣā, Pṛthivī, Sarasvatī etc. in the *Ṛgveda* does not match with the Śrī-Sūkta, a supplement to the same text which is addressed to Lakṣmī—a goddess of non-Vedic origin. Not only are the varied attributes of mātṛgaṇas (mother goddess) absent in the earlier works but even the theoretical triumph of the 'sexual dulism'[8] by the time of the Upaniṣads created the female deities merely as appendages or counterparts of the great gods like Indrāṇi, Rudrāṇī, Bhavānī etc. The goddess Lakṣmi or Śrī-Lakṣmī, who assumed much potency in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*[9] and in the *Mahābhārata* deserted the Asura king Bali for his neglect of the orthodox ways and the Brāhmaṇic practices passing over to Indra,[10] became immensely popular among the kings and the merchants alike. But still she functions only in consonance with Viṣṇu[11] and her worship failed to develop into an independent sectarian form. The emergence of Śāktism with its archaic rituals owes much to

[1]Cooke, op. cit., II, pp. 215-18; Hopkins, *EM*, p. 12.
[2]*Rāmāy.*, IV.39.27.
[3]Crooke, *Popular Religion and Folklore of Northern India*, II, p. 247; *Viṣ. P.*, II. Ch. 2.
[4]Hopkins, *EM*, p. 16.
[5]*ERE*, IV, pp. 300, 306; Majumdar, *Races and Culture of India*, 1961, pp. 346ff.
[6]Crooke, op. cit., p. 281.
[7]Majumdar, op. cit., pp. 346ff.
[8]Barth, op. cit., pp. 201-2.
[9]XI.4.1ff; see also *Tait. Up.*, I.4.
[10]*Mbh.*, XII. chs. 216-17.
[11]*Viṣ. P.*, 1.9.145.

the resurgence of primitive cultural contours making a revolting dent in the Neo-Orthodox society. The apparent dichotomy between the two cultural strata lay in the fact that by the time Śāktism assumes an independent character within the Vedic fold with its primitive ritual structure, the Neo-Orthodox society had developed technical skill, settled economic life, doctrine of non-violence and had evolved a sexual morality together with the increasingly rigid Varṇa order based on the patriarchal social system. But the impact of these cultural elements of the higher society goes to transform not only the significance but the structure of the Śākta rituals also.

The sectarian character of Śāktism had taken shape before the time of Varāhamihira[1] (fifth Century AD), for he lays down that the installation of the images of Mātṛgaṇas is to be done by the priest well-versed in the worship of the deity. As regards the social base of the Śākta worship, the formidable manifestation of the Mother Goddess in varied forms of the Mātṛgaṇas[2] having her dwelling place on trees, platforms, cross-roads, in caves, around cemeteries, mountains, cascades etc., and her motherly qualities overwhelmed by her terrifically militant and destructive attributes,[3] betray her association with the primitive cultural level. The destructive female deity, in contrast to the creative male god, is found among the tribal people. Among the Khondas of Orissa in opposition 'to their supreme creative deity, Būra Pennu or Bella Pennu, Light-god or Sun-god,' there stands his evil consort Tari Pennu the Earth-goddess, and the history of good and evil in the world is the history of his work and her counter-work. He created a world paradisaic, happy, harmless, she rebelled against his new creature man; she brought in disease, and poison and all disorder, 'sowing the seeds of sin in mankind as in a ploughed field.' 'Tari's sect holds that she still maintains the struggle, and even practically disposes of the happiness of man, doing evil or good on her own account, and allowing or not allowing the Creator's blessings to reach mankind."[4] Besides the considerably independent position of the goddess, what we find here is the idea that although dominantly the harbinger of evil, she may grant happiness to the mankind which could provide a base for the sectarian concept of Mother Goddess, more so as the earth goddess she must be impregnate with the concept of fertility in her brighter functional aspect.

The adoption of folk deities into the Vedic fold started much before our period. Such deities[5] as Jyeṣṭhā, Kapila-patnī, Kumbhī, Jyāyā, Hastimukhā, Vighapārṣadā, Nṛṛti, having lion attached to her chariot and tigers

[1]*Bṛhat Saṃhitā*, ed. Dwivedi, Sudhakar, Ch. 59, v. 19.
[2]*Mbh.*, Śalya Parva, Ch. 45.
[3]ibid, Ch. 45; Cf. *Mat. P.*, Ch. 172, pp. 123ff.
[4]Macpherson, *India*, p. 84; cf. Tylor, *Religion in Primitive Culture*, II, 1958, pp. 413-14.
[5]Banerjea, *DHI*, p. 381.

following her, appear in the *Baudhāyana Gṛhya Sūtra* (ed. Shama Sastri, pp. 294-96). This attribute of Nṛṛti resembles the supreme sectarian goddess Durgā-Kālī in the Epic-Purānic mythology. The process of Brāhmanizing the aboriginal goddess is marked in Arjuna's prayer addressed to Durgā in the Bhīṣma Parva (BE. Ch. 23) which does not fail to indicate her varied functions. The nature of primitive ritual connected with her must have been prevalent among the tribal people like the Śabaras, Barabaras, Pulindas etc. She is addressed as: 'Reverence to her, the leader of the Siddhas (indicating proto-Indian practices of Shamanic Yoga),[1] Āryā (Vedic epithet attributed to her) dweller on Mandara (suggesting her association with the hilly people), Kumārī (may signify her vergin aspect of Tāntric rite), Kālī and Kapālī (signifies importance of skulls in her ritual), . . . Caṇḍī (aggressive and destructive in character), Tāriṇī (deliveress), . . . Kātyāyanī (another Brāhmaṇic epithet), Karālī, Vijayā, Jayā (signify her terrific and militant aspect), who bears peacock's feathers as her banner, adorned with jewels, armed with many spears, sword and shield, young sister of the cowherd Kṛṣṇa,[2] always taking pleasure in the blood of demon Mahiṣa, . . . Umā (thus identified with Śiva also), Śākambharī (signifies her connection with fertility) . . . Veda, Srūti . . . Brāhmaṇya . . . (directly connected with Orthodoxy), always dwelling under Jambū . . . and Caitya trees (marks her popular worship). Besides, she is Brahmavidyā, Svadhā, the Mother of the Vedas. She lives in the fearful forest, deserted places . . . in the Pātāla (netherlands). She is philosophized as Māyā etc. This passage shows the theologians' attempt at bringing the aboriginal goddess to the orthodox fold, duly attributing her a number of the élite's cultural values and idioms. This passage of the *Mahābhārata* may be a late composition but the tendency of Brāhmanizing the aboriginal goddesses is traceable even in the Vedic literature. It is logical to believe that such transformation of the tribal goddess must have started much earlier than the composition of these texts and the passage in question can safely be taken as indicative of the cultural process of our period. In the *Bhīṣma* (ch. 23) and *Virāṭa* (Ch. 6) *Parvas* she is described almost in identical terms. She is said to be born from Yaśodā and dwelling in the Vindhyachal hill. She purifies the three worlds by her Brahmacarya but takes delight in liquor, flesh, and sacrificial victims. The goddess twice reverentially referred to in the *Harivaṃśa Purāṇa* (II. Ch. 3 and II. Ch. 120) undergoes the same process of transformation but again she retains her connections with tribal people and primitive rituals. She is expressly described as being worshipped by the proto-Indians like Śabara, Bārabara and Pulindas and surrounded by cocks, goats, rams, lions and tigers, signifying either violent rites involving animal sacrifice or her worship among the totemic people or both. She takes

[1]Eliade, *Yoga: Immortality and Freedom*, pp. 152, 318ff.

[2]In the *HV. P.* (II.3.10), she is the sister of Baladeva but in II.120.11 of the same text she is the sister of Viṣṇu and Indra. It indicates worship of the deity among the Vṛṣṇis.

delight in flesh mixed with wine.[1] She is Lakṣmī but takes the form of alakṣmī only to destroy demons.[2] She is honourarium of the priests and also Sītā (furrow) to the ploughmen,[3] which establishes her connections both with the priestly order and the peasantry. She is a special deity of the maritime traders.[4] But strangely enough she is called Pūtanā, killed by baby Kṛṣṇa.[5] The same deity presented both as the sister of Kṛṣṇa and as the demoness killed by him, shows the interlinked phases of cultural contradictions which the deity is brought to combine. The society to which the worship of the deity originally belonged still remained essentially antagonistic to the Vedic cultural aspirations. Since her worship was not yet completely merged in the Vedic orthodoxy, her independent tribal character gave spurt to the formulation of myths of the demoness subjugated by the Vṛṣṇi hero.

Further, she is said to be Kirātī and worshipped by thieves.[6] But she is worshipped also by Vṛṣṇis and Yādavas of Mathura region.[7] And finally, the sectarian prerequisite makes her the greatest Mother of all human and divine offsprings.[8] The iconographic representation of the goddess also makes her out the 'Supreme fountain-head of all divine power.'[9]

Śākta Ritual and its Patrons

Apart from the simpler ritual practices like Nyāsa, āvāhana, āsana, japa, offering of water, flowers, lamps, incense etc.,[10] developed around the goddess which too were sorted out from the image worshipping primitive strata, the typical Śākta rites were by far the most violent and orgiastic in nature. Despite the fact that the Vedic rites, especially those mentioned in the Brāhmaṇa literature, were full of erotic principles and violent sacrifices, and involved use of liquor, they cannot be equated[11] with or held as prevalent in the Śākta rituals, for the simple reason that the Śākta rites showed vehement protests against class system. They had their own base in the matriarchal society. As its rituals are steeped in magic, yoga[12] and orgiastic practices, they betray a deep-rooted connection with the most primitive

[1] *HV. P.*, II.3.7-12.
[2] ibid, II.3.12.
[3] ibid, II.3.9.
[4] ibid, II.3.14.
[5] ibid, II.3.22.
[6] ibid, II.120.19.
[7] ibid, II.4.46.
[8] ibid, II.120.21-24.
[9] Rao, Gopinath, op. cit., I, p. 337; *Mat. P.*, *Devi Mahātmya*, ch. 124. 23ff. This text may belong to *C.* 9th Century AD. see Desai, *Ancient Indian Society, Religion, and Mythology as Depicted in the Markaṇḍeya Purāṇa*, Baroda, 1968, pp. 3-4.
[10] Kane, *HDŚ*, II, p. 729.
[11] Woodroffe, *Śakti and Śakta*, 4th ed., 1951, p. 138; see also Gonda, *AEV* pp. 5-6.
[12] *ERE*, XII, p. 193 under Tantrism; Eliade, op. cit., pp. 338ff.

economy wherein the means of religious elevation continued to be the use of narcotics or liquor. The function of magic and ritual became of vital importance even in the agricultural economy as success in agriculture was considered to be dependent on these practices.[1] The ritual use of wine and bloody sacrifices were widely prevalent among the primitive tribes like Saoras.[2] Among the Khondas of Orissa also such ritual practices continue upto modern times.[3] As regards the connection of Vedas with the Śākta rite, it is pointed out[4] that the *Kulārṇava Tantra* (II.85. 140-141) holds that Kuladharma is based on the truth of the Veda." Although this may refer to the Atharvavedic rituals, but it is to be noted that the same text *Kulārṇava Tantra*, II) puts Vedācāra (Vedic rituals) as the lowest and Kulācāra as the highest.

The prevalence of bloody and orgiastic ritual in the Punjab regions, which later on became celebrated Śākta-Pīṭhas, is evidenced by the *Mahābhārata*. It is said that there is the city of Śākla in the Vāhīka country of five rivers which is to be shunned by the Vedic people.[5] It is inhabited by Jartika people who eat fried barley and garlic along with liquor made of treacle.[6] The character of the people is marked by licentious sexual habits especially on the days of festivities when they sing and dance. This must be connected with some cultic practices because it is said that in the city there lives a demoness who used to sing on the 14th day of the dark fortnights[7] that when shall I have the pleasure of . . . the songs of these Vāhīkas after eating beef and liquor of treacle and devouring a number of sheep along with only a handful of onion.[8] She declares that the birth of those is of no avail who do not eat flesh of pigs, cocks, cows, asses, camels and sheep.[9] The matriarchal base of this society is hinted, as property among them is said to be inherited by the sister's son of a man and not by his own son.[10] After a condemnation of these practices by Karṇa, Śalya is presented as asserting the prevalence of commendable vows among the men and women of higher orders.[11] It can be suggested that these elements of ritual must have been connected with some sort of Śākta worship, especially among the lower strata of society in that region. The passages evincing such information may be slightly later compositions but the very nature of the ritual feast suggests that these practices continued

[1]Chattopadhyaya, *Lokayata*, pp. 269ff.
[2]Elwin, *The Religion of an Indian Tribe*, pp. 187, also 16, 18.
[3]Frazer, *Golden Bough*, abridged ed., I, 1969, pp. 503f.
[4]Woodroffe, op. cit., p. 84.
[5]*Mbh.*, VIII.30.85ff.
[6]ibid, VIII.30.14-15.
[7]It is noteworthy that one of the auspicious days for Durgā of Vindhyan region also is the 14th day of the dark fortnight; *HV. P.*, II.120.12; see also *Mbh.*, BE. VIII.44.25f.
[8]ibid, VIII.43.26-27.
[9]ibid, VIII.30.32.
[10]ibid, BE. VIII.45.13.
[11]ibid, VIII.30.85.

from considerable antiquity. Apart from this primitive form of Śākta worship, an inscription (423-24 AD) of the Gupta times found at Gangadhara in Malwa, not only testifies the prevalence of the Tāntric rites in the Malwa region, but also suggests its patronage by the higher sections of the society. It records that Mayūrākṣaka, a minister of Viśvavarman, the father of Kumārgupta I's feudatory Bandhuvarma, built a very terrible abode, filled with female ghouls (*dākinī*), of the Divine Mother, who uttered loud and tremendous shouts in joy, and, who stirred up the very ocean with mighty winds rising from the magic rites (*tantra*) of their religion."[1] J. N. Banerjea[2] rightly points out that "the temple of Mātrikas could not be terrific by itself. It was the terrible nature of the rites, indulged by the votaries of the Divine Mothers in and near it in course of their peculiar form of worship."

As regards the terrific nature of Śākta ritual, it is evidenced by various sources. The *Harivaṃśa Purāṇa* (II.3.8) seems to suggest the sacrifice of cocks, goats, rams etc. to the goddess Durgā of Vindhya mountain. Even in modern times the Saoras sacrifice buffaloes, cows and bullocks, goats, pigs, fowls and peacocks to their deities.[3] A quite late work *Mahānirvāṇa Tantra* (6.105-106) also prescribed the use of the flesh of deer, goats, sheep, buffaloes, pigs, fish, tortoises etc. in the Tāntric rite. The traditional view also makes the use of these animals as non-vedic. In the *Mahābhārata*[4] it is said that the buffalo is the part (*aṃśa*) of Asura, while the cock and pork, that of Rākṣasas. Despite the fact that in its refinement the eighteenth century Tāntrism had travelled a long way, the *Mahānirvāṇa Tantra* (8.80.85) asserts that the Tāntric rites are meant for the Śūdras and the ordinary folk who get all their goals realised through them. Though the sexual elements do not appear with Durgā as described in the *Mahābhārata* and the *Harivaṃśa Purāṇa*, the use of wine, another article of Tāntric ritual finds clear mention which forms one of the vital elements of the primitive ritual like those of the Saoras.[5] Bāṇabhaṭṭa[6] describes the rites of tāntric nature performed by the lower order of the people (the Saoras) in honour of Durgā, which comprised offering of human and animal flesh and blood and their Śāstra is branded as the cry of Jackals and the teachers as owls. Vākpatirāja in his *Gauḍavaho*[7] mentions the worship of Kali by Kolī women and Śabaras. In the *Rāmāyaṇa* (Ayodhyā Kāṇḍa, 52.89) the goddess Ganges is worshipped with flesh and wine.

In fact, the vortex of the Śākta rites lay in the primitive strata which was transformed by the Brāhmaṇic theologians, who were as much moved

[1]Gangadhar Inscription of Viśvavarman, Fleet, *CII*, III, pp. 72-76.
[2]*The Purāṇic and Tāntric Religion*, p. 127.
[3]Elwin, op. cit., p. 188.
[4]*Mbh.*, BE. XIII.84.47-48.
[5]Elwin, op. cit., p. 187.
[6]*Kādambarī*, p. 224.
[7]cf. *JRAS*, 1905, pp. 355ff.

by the objective of rendering them less objectionable to the élite, as actuated by the need of the patronage of the masses. Although the tantric rites were developed parallel to the Vedic Saṃskāras,[1] caste considerations, religious elements of the Orthodox fold, and the Vedic hymns were well introduced in them. The substitutes for liquor for an ordinary Brāhmaṇa, Kṣatriya and Vaiśya are milk, ghee, and honey respectively.[2] Likewise, salt, ginger, sesamum, wheat, beans and garlic are some of the substitutes for meat.[3] Further, for the purification of wine, meat, fish, mudrā (fried grains) and also for sexual union the Ṛgvedic hymns are appropriated,[4] although they hardly fit in the texture of the revolting tāntric rites. Such transformations of the Śākta rituals presuppose Brāhmaṇic infiltration in the primitive strata which is indicated by the prayers addressed to Durgā in the *Mahābhārata*[5] and *Harivaṃśa Purāṇa*.[6] The tāntric rites of later times had connections with the *Atharvaveda* which is testified by the fact that the word 'ghoṣinī' occurring in the text signifies the female attendant of the terrible Rudra.[7] Further, the fact that a large number of Brāhmaṇas specialized in the Paippalāda Śākhā of the *Atharvaveda* in Orissa, one of the celebrated regions of tāntric rituals, may signify that the tantra-like and magical ritual content of the *Atharvaveda*[8] suited them to enlist the local clientele practising tāntric rites. Brāhmaṇas, specialization in the Kaula school of tāntrism in Kashmir is also well-known. In modern times too the Brāhmaṇas used to minister to the worship of the goddess, involving even human sacrifice. Sir John Malcolm records that the Karhāda Brāhmaṇa of Sahayadri Khanda (in the Deccan) used to sacrifice a young Brāhmaṇa annually to a female deity of terrible attributes.[9] The practice of human sacrifice for propitiating the goddess survived in different pockets in India even up to quite modern times.[10] The instances of the Brāhmaṇas' connection with this type of horrifying rite may not be very numerous.[11] But it is interesting to note that the blood of a Brāhmaṇa seems to be held especially efficacious, because the boys and girls of this caste were much sought after as the victim for sacrifice.

Despite the Brāhmaṇic transformations, the tāntric ritual continued to draw its patronage from the lower social order and correspondingly it

[1]Chakravarti, *Tantras*, p. 4.
[2]*Bhairavayāmala*, ch. I; cf. Woodroffe, *Śakti and Śakta*, p. 609; *Purscaryārṇava*, p. 855.
[3]*Bhairavayāmala*, ch. I; cf. Woodroffe, op. cit., p. 609.
[4]Chakravarti, op. cit., pp. 4ff.
[5]*supra*, pp. 96-97.
[6]*supra*, pp. 97-98.
[7]Banerjea, *Purāṇic and Tāntric Religion*, p. 128.
[8]ibid, pp. 128f.
[9]John Wilson, *Indian Caste*, II, pp. 21-23.
[10]Crooke, *The Popular Religion and Folk-lore of Northern India*, II, 1896, pp. 169-70.
[11]ibid, pp. 169ff.

retained its original ritual structure. The Vīra worshipper is authorized to use the Pañcatatvas in their literal sense.[1] The elaboration of the varieties of wine, flesh, fish and women to be used in the rite even in late works indicates the same.[2] In the Bhairavīcakra rite the beautiful maidens from the castes of washerman, caṇḍāla kaivarta etc. are to be engaged.[3] The worship of Kālī is required to be done in the house of either an oilman or a potter.[4] People practising such rites seem to have belonged originally to primitive stocks like the Śabaras, Kirātas, etc. and entered the Vedic-fold as Śūdras of various cases like peasants, cultivators, carpenters, weavers, herdsmen etc. who used to worship the grāmadevatās in their archaic fashion even upto modern times.[5] The prevalence of the orgiastic Śabarotsava in Bengal as an agricultural rite in honour of Durgā also proves the origin of such rituals from the primitive strata.[6]

Thus it can be held that the worship of the Mother Goddess as an independent sect by the higher level of society was well established before the beginning of the period of our study. The archaic Śākta rituals, at times condemned as demonic by the authors of our age, continued up to quite late Medieval times. As to the factors which inhibited the complete success of the Brāhmaṇic attempt at transforming the rites are plain and simple. The social disability and the weak economic position of the masses made them cling to the older form of worship, although some sections of the Brāhmaṇas seem to have been associated with this ritual level also. The people of the lower strata, devoid of material means and intellectually not quite sharing the élite's values and ideologies, could hardly lay their hope on the aristocratic rites and virtues for securing salvation. The downright surrender to the great deities may bring a graceful margin of hope-in life, but the crude rites had unfailing appeal to common peoples' emo tion and sensuality which not only rendered life viable at the lower level, but provided a plane of strong protest against the élite's higher culture which denied social justice to them.

Besides terrific Śākta rites largely prevalent amongst the masses, the Śākta cult, involving less bloody form of worship of Durgā, Kālī etc., was patronised by diverse sections of the society. The Epic heroes like Arjuna, Pradyumna, Yudhiṣṭhira, Sage Vaiśampāyana, worshipped the goddess. Among the Pañcāla-Mitra series of coins, some coins of Bhadraghoṣa show on the reverse a female goddess taken to be Bhadrā, or Lakṣmī or

[1]Woodroffe, op. cit., p. 606.

[2]*Mahānirvāṇa Tantra*, Ch. VI.

[3]Bose and Haldar, *Tantras: Their Philosophy and Occult Secret*, p. 151.

[4]Shastri, Haraprasad, Nepal Durbar Manuscript, I, p. 176, Preface, p. 1xi; vide *JRSB*, Proceedings, 1921, pp. XXI-XXV.

[5]*Smṛti-Purāṇa Samuccaya*, vide, Oppert, *The Original Inhabitants of India*, p. 459; Monier Williams, *Brahmanism and Hinduism*, p. 225; Crooke, op. cit., I, pp. 94-95.

[6]*Kālikā Purāṇa*, LXI, 21-22; *Bṛhaddharma Purāṇa*, III.6.61-88 (17th Century AD); vide Chanda, *Indo-Aryan Races*, p. 132.

Durgā.[1] The bureaucrats like Viśvavarman of the Gupta times, too, patronised Śākta sect.[2] Harṣa was also a worshipper of the goddess.[3] The Durgā temples of Aihole and Bhabua (Shahabad District) also mark the popularity of the sect. Seals from Nalanda belonging to the village organisations of the Gupta times depict Durgā Siṃhavāhinī and other Mātṛigaṇas.[4] They are quite tāntric in character, which proves the patronage to the sectarian goddess by the common folk. It seems that the rulers of foreign stock also patronised this female worship. The coins of Huviṣka bears the name 'Umā.'[5] The coins type no. 30 of Azes in the Punjab Museum on its obverse, according to Banerjea, represents Durgā-Siṃhavāhinī.[6]

Śāktism flourished vigorously on the fringes of the orthodox cultural regions and later on the Śākta-pīṭhas developed in Punjab (Jalandhar), Orissa, Assam, Tibet etc. During our times the Śākta worship having enough primitive characteristics, seems to have made a considerable dent in orthodoxy by reaching the heart of the neo-Vedic cultural region, i.e., Mathura and its vicinity. Not only that the goddess was worshipped by the cowherds of Vraja in her Yogamāyā form but she is made to take birth from Yaśodā. It seems that by the sixth Century AD Śākta worship enlists the patronage of different social sections and gets distributed widely. The *Matsya Purāṇa* (ch. 13) recounts her one hundred and eight names and identifies her different attributes with different regions covering practically the whole of the Indian subcontinent.

4. The Material Substratum as the Basis of Pantheonic Syncretism in the Neo-Orthodox Creed

The Epics and the Purāṇas contain many a legend of rivalry among the deities of Neo-Orthodox creed. In the *Mahābhārata*,[7] Indra is presented as antagonistic to Śiva. Kṛṣṇa who sets Kashi,[8] the abode of Śiva, on fire, is also opposed[9] to Indra. Rudra's fightings with Nārāyaṇa get elaborated in the Śānti Parva.[10] As these deities were the objects of worship, the legends reflecting antagonism between them signify a certain degree of sectarian rivalry. While the theologians of our times record this tradition of sectarian rivalry, they also show their untiring efforts to curb it by bringing

[1]Banerjea, *DHI*, p. 133.
[2]Fleet, *CII*, III, pp. 72-76.
[3]*Harṣacarita*, cf. Payne, *The Shaktas*, p. 39.
[4]Benerjea, *DHI*, p. 186.
[5]vide *supra*, p. 47.
[6]Banerjea, op. cit., pp. 134-35.
[7]Droṇa Parva, 202, 83ff.
[8]*Viṣ. P.*, V.34.41ff.
[9]ibid.
[10]Ch. 33

about syncretism within Neo-Orthodox (Epic-Purāṇic) creed.[1] The Brāhmaṇa theologians of the enlightened circles could hardly entertain the development of sectarianism prone to threaten the internal unity of Neo-Orthodoxy much needed to meet the challenge of heterodox faith. In our attempt at exploring the fundamental basis of syncretism in the Epic-Purāṇic creed, what appears to be of utmost importance is to trace out the cardinal attributes of the deities and their symbolic functions formulated in the enormous mass of myths and legends. Unless we reach the core of the ideas shaping the structure of beliefs responsible for the growth of myths, the elaboration of the outward synthesis of deities may not only be at times misleading but could also give an impression that the relevant texts were a piece of pure fancy conceived by the authors for mere cultic compromises. We propose to take up only few instances for the analysis in support of our contention.

Viṣṇu, essentially a solar[2] deity representing 'heat'[3] and Nārāyaṇa, basically signifying 'water,'[4] were believed to be the most vital deities who sustain the vegetal world. Kṛṣṇa in the form of Viṣṇu is made to assert that it is his splendour which, dwelling in the Sun, lights up the whole universe.[5] The same splendour dwells in the Moon and the Fire. Again he elaborates[6] that entering the earth he upholds creatures by his force and becoming the juicy Moon, he nourishes all herbs. This 'heat'[7] represented by Kṛṣṇa-Vīṣnu, is seen operating even in the process of digestion of fourfold food. In the *Mahābhārata* the vital functions of Sun-heat are mentioned in a number of passages. At one place[8] it is said that the Sun, out of compassion for the hungry creatures draws up water. It is converted into clouds of rain by the lord of plant (Moon) and the Sun also enters the earth with his heat[9] along with the rain-water. In the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*,[10] Indra (the lord of rain and cloud) is held as the source of food grains and ultimately the source of subsistence for the whole world. He, as 'parjanyadevatā' (lord of cloud), draws up water through the rays of the Sun and causes rain on the earth. The belief in this function of sun-heat would make Viṣṇu (the symbol of the Sun and by implication of its heat also) hide himself in the

[1]Inspite of this attempt, the tension between the Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava divines was acute throughout the mediaeval times. However, the lay devotees and common masses seem to have generally followed this synthetic creed.

[2]Muir, *OST*, IV, pp. 118-20.

[3]Gonda, *AEV*, pp. 11ff, 21.

[4]Bhandarkar, *Vaṣṇavism, Śaivism and other Minor Sects*, p. 43; see per contra the view of Suvira Jaiswal, *ODV*, pp. 43ff.

[5]*Gītā*, XV.12.

[6]ibid, XV.13.

[7]ibid, XV.14.

[8]*Mbh.*, III.3.5ff.

[9]Gonda, op. cit., p. 27.

[10]V,10,19ff,

roots of the plants.[1] Dyaus (sky-god) "as a female deity is said to be pregnant for nine months and then bearing rain-water conceived of Sun-beams."[2] "In the home of the Self-existent Great Father the gleaming (fe.) Dyaus poured[3] forth ambrosia and Indra rained upon the crops." Again, the Sun is benefactor, providing food by "raining on the seven continents."[4] A passage of the Śānti Parva[5] makes an explicitly positive statement: "It was by the aid of 'tapa' (heat) that the Grandsire created food, fruit, and root." It is rightly observed:[6] "Farmers and peasants, all over the world, almost instinctly know that the growth of grains and fruits is largely dependant on the favourable influence of Sun-beams which, being absorbed by the plants, may be said to pervade them." In an elaborate discourse[7] all the five basic elements, i.e., sky (Space), fire, water, air, and earth are seen as playing a vital role in the formation of plants. The supreme importance of these forces of nature in the creation of vegetal life was basically responsible for the formulation of the typical characteristics of many Epic-Purāṇic deities.

The elementary relations between 'heat' (the Sun) and 'water'—so vital for the growth of world sustaining vegetation, prepared the ground for the interchange of divine attributes between Viṣṇu and Nārāyaṇa who symbolize both these elements of nature respectively. This process, in turn, would lead to their identification. The belief in the inseparable relations between these two elements are transformed into myths by instituting a host of symbolic features in and around the figures of the deities in the process of their personification. Viṣṇu not only reclines[8] on the coils of snakes in the ocean (water) but even resides[9] under the water. Nārāyaṇa is described as glowing[10] like the Sun and is addressed[11] as the Sun and even as the master[12] of the Sun. The myth, which makes Viṣṇu and Nārāyaṇa the creators of the golden age (Satyayuga) signifying the plenty of agricultural produce,[13] is based on the belief in the vital role of these elements (symbolised by these deities) operating in the vegetal cycle and eventually in the process of agricultural production. The development of Śrī-Lakṣmī as the goddess of wealth makes her connection with Viṣṇu meaningful.

The pastoral elements in the cult of Kṛṣṇa is counter-balanced by making

[1] *ŚBr.*, 1.2.5.10.
[2] *Rāmāyaṇa*, IV.28.3; cf. Hopkins, *EM*, p. 78.
[3] *Rāmāyaṇa*, II.45.29; cf. Hopkins, *EM*, p. 78.
[4] *Mbh.*, XIII.95.18ff.
[5] 155.3.
[6] Gonda, *AEV*, p. 26.
[7] *Mbh.*, XII. Chs. 176-77.
[8] *Mbh.*, BE. XII. Ch. 209.
[9] ibid.
[10] *Mbh.*, XII.340.102; ibid, XII.341.48.
[11] ibid, XII. Ch. 338.
[12] ibid, XII.340.102.
[13] *Mbh.*, XII.33.25; ibid, XII.321.8-9.

him the younger brother of Saṅkarṣaṇa, the holder of the plough. The intimate association of the Brāhmaṇas with the agricultural ritual and activity is suggested by the passage[1] which seeks to integrate them with Saṅkarṣaṇa. The typical Brāhmanical way of visualising the deities on the conceptual plane of their functions, associates Kṛṣṇa with 'water'[2] which would easily identify him with Nārāyaṇa and also with Viṣṇu, for he is some times described as the wielder[3] of the plough. A passage[4] of the *Mahābhārata* explicitly presents Viṣṇu as tilling the earth and having the form of a black metal (iron).[5] The identification[6] of Rāma-Dāśarathī with Viṣṇu, is evolved on the same conceptual plane having its basis in the vegetal world. The identification of Rāma with Vāsudeva-Kṛṣṇa must have been made greatly easier by the fact that both of them are connected with agriculture, the former as the consort of Sītā (furrow) and the latter as the brother of Saṅkarṣaṇa (furrow). It is interesting to note that the rain-god Indra is presented[7] as comforting Sītā, the consort of Rāma. The hero-god Vāsudeva's connection on the one hand with Saṅkarṣaṇa and on the other with Durgā (Gaurī)[8]—both representing vegetal attributes—make him related to the agricultural social milieu. The Mother Goddess, representing the earth and its fertility in her various forms, was made eventually the source of all creatures.

Despite the steady ascendancy of agriculture, the pastoral economy was also a potent source of subsistence during the period of our study. Rather, at times the people seem to have practised both[9] the types of economy attaching relatively greater degree of importance to one of them. We know that the Andhaka and Vṛṣṇi septs of the Yādava tribe pursued both means of subsistence. An underlying tension between the people overwhelmingly dependent on either of them must have been existing, which led to the formulation of legends recounting Kṛṣṇa's antagonism to Indra. He rejected the Sītāyajña (agricultural sacrifice in honour of Sītā) and the worship of rain-god Indra in favour of Giriyajña or Goyajña[10] (sacrifice in honour of mountain or cattle). But Viṣṇu, symbolizing the Sun, must have been quite important even to the pastoral people. In the *Saura Purāṇa* (43.40) bilva, apāmārga, śamī, and dūrvā plants are said to be dear to Viṣṇu. Bhāsa depicts[11] Nārāyaṇa in the form of Viṣṇu in Tretāyuga while the same god in Dvāpara

[1]*Mbh.*, BE. XII.344.15-16; see also *supra*, p. 42.
[2]ibid, BE. XII.47.60.
[3]ibid, XIII.149.73.
[4]ibid, XII.330.14.
[5]ibid, Nīlakaṇṭha on *Mbh.*, XII.330.14.
[6]*Gītā*, X.31.
[7]*Rāmāyaṇa*, Mallinātha ṭikā Ch. II. śloka 9.
[8]Hopkins, *EM*, p. 224; G.P. Upadhyay, 'Social Perspective of Dakṣa Prajāpati' Sacrifice,' *IHC*, Proceedings, 1973, p. 127.
[9]Majumdar, and Pusalker, ed., *AIU*, p. 597.
[10]*Viṣ. P.*, V.10.26ff.
[11]*Bālacarita*, I.1.

age becomes Rāma having his person dark as dūrvā grass. The dūrvā grass is considered as the "sweetest and most nutritious pasture for cattle."[1] In the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* it is emphasized that Mantrayajña (recitation of hymns), Sīrayajña (sacrifice in honour of plough), and Giriyajña are meant[2] exclusively for the Brāhmāṇas, peasants, and shepherds respectively. But it is interesting to note that feast[3] to the Brāhmaṇas forms the integral part of Giriyajña, which definitely proves that the Brāhmaṇas were as much connected with the pastoral society and its ritual as with the agricultural ones.

The Śaiva sect was evolved by the Epic-Purāṇic theologians taking the Vedic and Non-Vedic cultic elements. Right from the later Vedic times, heterogenous characteristics were attributed to Rudra-Śiva. Although the lord of the men of letters, artisans etc., he is inseparably connected with vegetation in the texts of our times. In his liṅga (phallic) form he is the greatest deity surpassing[4] Brahmā and Viṣṇu. His worship in the form of 'liṅgam' is connected with his Bhava (fertility) aspect. Rāma is identified[5] with Bhava (creation), i.e., Śiva and Sītā (furrow) with Giriputrī, i.e Pārvatī (the Earth). The Nāga or serpent as a symbol of fertility[6] fortifies. the same belief in Śaivism. The concept of sexual dualism became a vital symbol of fertility which would not only make Śiva the consort of Pārvatī (the Earth) but would also transform him as a bi-sexual deity[7] (*ardhanārīśvara*). Śiva's function as a fertility god in various myths woven around him would easily associate him with the deities of similar significance· Vināyaka Gaṇapati, who as Gaṇeśa became son to Śiva, was a deity symbolising fertility.[8] Kārttikeya, himself identified with different deities like Kumāra, Skanda, Viśākha etc., is presented in the *Mahābhārata* and Purāṇas as a great war-god. Although, born from Kṛttikās, he is son[9] of Śiva also. But his vehicle the peacock, does not support his military attributes. Kārttikeya appears to have grown as deity basically out of primitive principles of vegetal world. The basic belief[10] that thunderbolt or lightning brings down the celestial cloud-water seems to have led to the formulation of the myth of fighting[11] between Rudra, the holder[12] of the

[1]Keith, *RPVU*, II, p. 363; see also Gonda, *AEV*, p. 13; also *SBE*, XLI, p. 187 fn. 3,
[2]*Viṣ. P.*, V.10.26ff.
[3]ibid, V. Ch. 10.
[4]*Vāyu P.*, 55.18; *Mat. P.*, 188.57; *Bḍ., P.*, 26.21.
[5]*Rāmāyaṇa*, IV.76.3ff.
[6]Mircea Eliade observes: "Aux Indes, les serpents ont été regardés des l'époque du buddisme (cf. des Jātakas) comme les distributeurs de la fertilité universelle," . . . . . *Traité D'Histoire Des Religions*, Paris, 1968, p. 149; see also Vogel, *Indian Serpent-lore*, p. 19.
[7]*Mbh.*, BE. XIII.14.293 and 298.
[8]Chhattopadhya, Deviprasad, *Lokāyata*, p. 129.
[9]Chatterji, *The Cult of Skanda-Kārttikeya in Ancient India*, Calcutta, 1970, pp. 3-4.
[10]Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, pp. 108ff.
[11]*Mbh.*, XII.329.15; ibid, BE. XII.342.26.
[12]*ṚV*, 1.174; VIII.79.6.

thunderbolt (a weapon originally ascribed to Indra), and Nārāyaṇa, the deity symbolizing water as well as cloud-water. In the Epic-Purāṇic framework of Śaivite myth, lightning, symbolized by the arrow or trident of Śiva, is held as a far more effective weapon[1] for bringing down the cloud-water in comparison to the thunderbolt of Indra. The origin of the thunderbolt and lightning from the cloud-water itself must have been responsible for making the deity Nārāyaṇa the originator of Rudra out of his anger.[2] However, Rudra is eventually identified[3] with Nārāyaṇa as one and the same god. Nārāyaṇa is said[4] to be the worshipper of Rudra in different ages.

Rudra-Śiva as Pasunāmapati (the lord of the animal world) and Vanaspatināmapati (the lord of the vegetal world) seems to be representing both the pastoral and agricultural social milieux. Both Aj-Ekapād and Rudra were the Vedic deities but their identification in the Epic *Mahābhārata* must have been done in order to combine different cultural traditions in the personality of Rudra-Śiva. The genesis of the deity Aja-Ekapād who represents the vegetation or plant itself,[5] lay in the primitive belief that animal and vegetation contain the same life-spirit and that the same sap passes through both of them. The attributes of Aja-Ekapād represent the undercurrent tension between the pastoral social section subsisting on animal flesh and the agricultural society tending to make agricultural produce the primary source of subsistence.[6] This tradition resounds in the Epic legend of the sacrifice of Uparicaravasu,[7] wherein the gods and seers held 'aja' as signifying 'animal' and 'food grain' respectively, but the latter import was eventually declared to be the proper significance of the term. The typical Vedic attributes of Rudra as storm-god and also as lightning-god are retained in some of the accounts of the Epic and Purāṇas. However, Rudra, who had intimate connection with the nomadic Vrātyas in the Vedic times, was steadily transformed into a god of the vegetal world by incorporating symbolically a number of agricultural functions in the Śaivite rituals and myths. The myth[8] of tripuradahana (the burnig of three cities) represents Śiva as destroyer of the passing-out year, harbinger of the new agricultural season, maker of rain, and finally, a vegetal deity.[9]

The enormous body of Vaiṣṇava and Śaiva myths reveals that reassuring of man's control over the various aspects of nature was the basic motive,

[1]Karṇa Parva Ch. 3; *Bhāg. P.*, VII. Ch. 10; *Mbh.*, BE. XII. Ch. 342.
[2]ibid, XII.328.12.19.
[3]ibid, XII.328.20-21.
[4]*Mbh.*, XII.328.22ff.
[5]G.P. Upadhyay, 'Re-examination of the Nature and Significance of the Vedic Deity Aja-Ekapād,' *IHC*, Proc., 1975, 36th. Session, pp. 71-73.
[6]ibid, p. 73.
[7]*Mbh.*, XII. Chs. 322-23, and 324.
[8]Droṇa Parva, Ch. 202; Anuśāsana Parva, Ch. 160.
[9]G.P. Upadhyay, 'Reappraisal of the Myth of Tripuradahana,' *JIH*, LIV, 1976, pp. 542-45.

symbolically formulated by the theologians, which was vital for the activity of production. The belief system of the ancient people visualised the forces of nature, crystallized into the attributes of deities, operating to promote the production. It is to be noted that for the ancient people the whole range of material pursuits connected with agriculture was believed to be the ritual process performed with divine favour. The start of the agricultural season, the formation of clouds, precipitation, ploughing, sowing, the growth of vegetation, its harvest etc. were regarded as ritual acts. Further, Mircea Eliade rightly remarks: "Pour l' home 'primitif' l' agriculture, comme toute autre activité essentielle, n'est pas une simple technique profane. Ayant trait à la vie, et poursuivant l'accroissement prodigieux de cette vie présente dans les graines, dans le sillon, dans la pluie et dans les génies de la végétation, l' agriculture est avant tout un rituel."[1] The corresponding belief finds its modern survival among the Saoras (Śabaras) to whom "every part of the agricultural process in a religious act," their "field is a temple. . . ."[2] Despite the fact that most of the deities are duly personified as the object of worship, their original symbolic functions of materialistic import rooted in the various aspects of the vegetal cycle and process of production are never lost sight of. Rather the multitude of Epic-Purāṇic myths and legends reveal the great emphasis accorded to these functions of the deities, which provided the common material plane for evolving out a synthesis of the deities, leading eventually to the development of a syncretic creed.

The deities, grown out of the primitive belief in the vegetal principles or getting transformed to suit the aspirations of the agricultural social milieu, show that the society of northern India, particularly during the period under review, was undergoing vigorous changes in cultural values, on account of the ascendancy of the agricultural economy which ultimately became the bed-rock of Indian culture. The expansion of agriculture and the spread of Epic-Purāṇic culture went hand in hand especially after the later Vedic times. This phenomenon seems to be largely responsible[3] for the origin and growth of the tīrthas and holy spots which developed as the centres of Neo-Vedic culture. The intimate connections of the pilgrimages with a host of deities, ṛṣis, yakṣas, Śrāddha rite etc., revealing their primary functions as reviving fecundity and granting good harvest, show that originally the institution of tīrtha was directed to building up a way of life congenial to agricultural economy. The vigorous expansion of agriculture and the consequential origin of tīrthas seem to be coeval with the second phase of iron in northern India (500-200 BC), when "more agricultural im-

[1]Eliade, Mircea, op. cit., p. 281.
[2]Elwin, *The Religion of an Indian Tribe*, p. 299.
[3]G.P. Upadhyay, 'The Origins and Functions of the Tīrthas . . .' paper presented at the Indian History Congress, 37th session, Calicut, 1976.

plements are encountered.'[1] But the sustained impact of the economic transformation on Epic-Purāṇic religion is clearly visible, which was vitally responsible for the religious reconstruction in the period under review. The Brāhmaṇas as the donees of the land-grants had to extol the gift of land and the same class was responsible for the adulation of the institution of tīrtha and its growth. The Brāhmaṇas, even as theologians, contributed significantly to the organization of production by rearing an ideology and a creed suited to promote the agricultural economy.

The symbolic functions of the deities representing the beliefs, principles, and actions connected with the process of production seem to have rendered the synthesis of the sectarian gods and goddesses viable. In the *Mahābhārata*[2] Kṛṣṇa is described as receiving boons from Śiva after worshipping him. Vāsudeva-Kṛṣṇa had secured[3] thousands of wives by worshipping Śiva and his consort Umā. Nārāyaṇa performs[4] austerities to appease Śiva. The tendency of pantheonic synthesis was so strong among the theologians of our times that they even preceived[5] Śiva as Viṣṇu and Viṣṇu as Śiva. Again, Kṛṣṇa is said to have raised the earth in his boar incarnation and the same Kṛṣṇa destroys it as Rudra in his liṅga[6] form. The most typical illustration of this synthetic appreciation of the deities is presented by their interchangeable attributes, elaborated in the addresses and adorations often branded as and running into 'Sahaśranāma' or thousand names. The attempt of the Brāhmaṇa theologians at synthesization of deities had its iconographic orientation also. A norm for the synthesized image of Śiva-Nārāyaṇa was laid down having the representations[7] of Mādhava (Kṛṣṇa) to the left and Śūlapāṇī (Śiva) to the right. The concept of four ages also betrays that its inherent characteristics were rooted in the agricultural society. The kṛta (golden) age connected[8] with the Brāhmaṇas is held as an age of plenty of production.[9] The Kali age starting with the Puṣya (Tiṣya) constellation[10] (which falls in the month of July according to the solar calendar), marks the commencement[11] of mansoon and the new agriçultural[12] cycle. The Kali age is presided over by Saṅkarṣaṇa[13] (furrow), and it is held[1] as the age of the Śūdras. It clearly indicates the impor-

[1]Sharma, "Class Formation and its Material Basis in the Upper Gangetic Basn *c.* 1000-500 BC), *The Indian Historical Review*, II, no. I, 1975, p. 2.
[2]VII.172.89ff; ibid, BE. VII.201.95-96.
[3]*Mbh.*, BE. XIII.15.7.
[4]ibid, VII.172.70, 72.
[5]*Mbh.*, III.39.76.
[6]ibid, XIII.149.24ff.
[7]*Mat. P.*, 260.22(a).
[8]*Vāyu. P.*, 78.36.
[9]*Mat. P.*, Chs. 143-4.
[10]*Mbh.*, XII.327.76.
[11]*Śiva P.*, V.1.46-49.
[12]G.P. Upadhyay, 'Reappraisal of the Myth of Tripuradahana,' *JIH*, LIV, 1976, p. 543.
[13]*Mbh.*, XIII.47.20(b).

tance of the Śūdras' role as peasants and labourers in the agricultural season, branded in the mythological framework as Kali age. Viṣṇu is held as worshipped in dvāpara[2] which is known as Vaiśya-yuga,[3] *i.e.*, the age of the Vaiśya class engaged in cattle-rearing, agriculture, and trade. It is interesting to note that most of the Vaiśyas even in modern times are the followers of various sects and sub-sects of Vaiṣṇavism, which makes the connection of Viṣṇu with vegetal cycle socially meaningful. But in their zeal for synthesis, the authors have identified the four ages with the four steps of Viṣṇu[4] in his boar incarnation, and Śiva is declared to be worshipped in all the four ages.[5]

Thus we see that the process of synthesis of deities and the ideological syncretism was brought about through various channels by the Brāhmaṇic authors of our period. The syncretism on the devotional[6] plane gave the Epic-Purāṇic creed a psychological inner unity, for it preaches a common mode of approach to god on emotional basis. The familial relations among the deities, developed through myths, must have made the tenet of Bhakti a more concrete experience at the social level. The doctrinal syncretism[7] interfused the rival life-views, reducing the ideological contradictions in Epic-Purāṇic culture to a considerable extent. But the deities at one level, representing symbolically the forces of nature, while at another intimately associated with symbols of fertility and elements of the agricultural milieu, clearly reveal that the material substratum rooted in the agricultural society provided the solid basis of a syncretic creed to the Neo-Orthodox fold.

[1]*Vāyu P.*, 78.36; see also Patil, *Cultural History from the Vāyu Purāṇa*, Poona, 1946, p. 77.

[2]*Vāyu P.*, 32.21.

[3]ibid, 78.36.

[4]ibid, 23.105.

[5]ibid, 32.21.

[6]see *supra*, pp. 50ff.

[7]vide *supra*, pp. 52ff.

Chapter 5

BRĀHMAṆAS AND SOCIETY (SYSTEMATIZATION AND STANDARDIZATION OF THE SOCIAL ORDERS)

1. Brāhmaṇas and Social Conservatism

The Brāhmaṇa authors of the Dharmaśāstras were social thinkers[1] 'par excellence.' We have already seen that the impact of heterodox movements together with foreign inroads followed by their settlement caused considerable disruption of the social institutions of the orthodox fold. Deviations from class binding became a general feature. The institution of family was greatly disturbed on account of the fall in morality especially among women. The intellectual line of Buddhist attack on the Vedic social system was also a testing problem before orthodoxy. Against these challenges the role of Brāhmaṇa social leaders was a conservative one, as they asserted traditional social institutions.[2] However, relative changes were introduced therein which evidence the spirit of the authors to bring about the required transformation in order to fit the social institutions in the new situation.

The geographical layout as given in the *Manusmṛti* is very important in this connection. Out of the four geographical regions described therein Brahmāvarta is said to be the God-created tract lying between the two divine rivers, the Sarasvatī and the Dṛsadvatī.[3] Manu declares that the custom prevalent in this land, received from successive traditions, concerning castes and even mixed castes, is called the virtuous custom[4]. He distinguishes Brahmāvarta from Brahmarṣideśa[5] which comparised the territories of Kurukṣetra, Matsya, Pañcāla (Kānyakubja) and Śūrasena (Mathura region). He declares that from a Brāhmaṇa born in that tract let all the men on the earth learn their respective duties.[6] Then there is the tract of land known as Madhyadeśa, between the Himalaya and Vindhya mountains to the west of Prayaga and to the east of Vinaśana[7], while

[1] *Manu*, I.107; *Mbh.*, XIII.136.3-6.
[2] ibid, I.107; I.59.
[3] *Manu*, II.17.
[4] ibid, II.18.
[5] ibid, II.19; *Mbh.*, VIII.45.16.
[6] *Manu*, II.20.
[7] ibid, II.21.

Āryāvarta stretches from the eastern to the western oceans between the above-mentioned two mountains.[1]

The geographical data in Manu are significant for they sketch out the cultural regions of varying importance and categories. The Āryandom of Manu comprised practically the whole of India north of the Vindhya. The Madhyadeśa which was west of Prayaga seems to be more or less the same as the Middle region of the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, although the peoples are not quite the same. Brahmarṣideśa is much shorter than the Madhyadeśa, its eastern limit not going much beyond the land of the Pañcālas (modern Kanauj).[2] The Kurus and the Pāñcālas of the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* are described in Brahmarṣideśa, but the Matsyas (probably belonging to the modern Jaipur region) and the Śūrasenas (of Mathura region) appear instead of the Vaśas and the Uśīnaras. This country of the Brahmarṣis, in spite of Buddhist expansion beyond Purathima up to Taneśvara, was still the most sacred region of Vedic orthodoxy. The Brāhmaṇas of this land were deemed competent for acculturation of the people. The regions of Kāśī and Videha, once intellectual centres of orthodoxy,[3] are excluded even from the Madhyadeśa by Manu. In hailing Brahmāvarta in greater esteem Manu seems to portray only the tradition because he was writing, as his internal evidence also shows, after his region fell to the alien dominance.[4] It is worthwhile to note that the land of the earliest Āryan settlement was designated Brahmāvarta and the Āryan pale extended much beyond the sacred land of the then Vedic orthodoxy. Āryāvarta of Buddhāyana and Vasiṣṭha, supported also by Patañjali,[5] is smaller than that of Manu and lies to the east of the place where Sarasvatī disappears (in Hissar District), to the west of Kālakavana, to the north of the mountains Pāriyātra and Vindhya and to the south of the Himalaya.[6] But Manu's extension of Āryadom is well explained by Medhātithi,[7] who says that the country is called Āryāvarta 'because Āryans again and again spring up there and because the Mlecchas even if they overrun it from time to time do not abide there for long.' He further explains[8] that 'if a Kṣatriya king of excellent conduct were to conquer the Mleccha, establish the system of four Varṇas (in the Mleccha country) and assign to them a position similar to that of Cāṇḍālas in Āryāvarta, even that (Mleccha) country would be fit for sacrifice, since the earth is not by itself impure but becomes so through contact (of impure persons or things). The same

[1]ibid, II.22.

[2]Kullūka on *Manu*, II.19.

[3]*KBr.*, IV.I; *Bṛ. Up.*, III.1.1.

[4]In the *Mahābhārata* the countries in the land of the Punjab and Sindhu are despised as 'dharmabāhya' on account of alien influences. Karṇa Parva, 43.5-8; Critical Edition VIII.30. 11-15; cf. *Mit.* on *Yāj.*, III.292.

[5]*Mahābhāṣya* on Pāṇini. II.4.10; Kielhorn, I, p. 475; III, p. 174.

[6]*BDS*, I.1.27; *VDS*, I.8-9 and 12-13.

[7]Medhātithi on *Manu*, II.22.

[8]ibid., II.23.

criterion we find in the *Viṣṇu Smṛti* when it is said[1] that the country where four Varṇas are not established is to be known as Mleccha country and Āryāvarta is beyond that.[2] Thus, Brahmarṣideśa of Manu and the Madhyadeśa of the later works[3] seems to be the land of Vedic orthodoxy 'par excellence.' Manu's geographical considerations were deeply rooted in orthodox conservatism, while he and his commentators unmistakably show the spirit of cultural expansion.

2. The Theory of Dharma of Different Ages

Even the conservative author of the *Manusmṛti,* does not fail to recognise the forces of change which require different sets of 'dharma' befitting the characteristics of the age. He lays down:[4] 'the desired result of sacrificial rites and the supernatural power of embodied spirit are fruits proportioned among men according to the character of the ages.' He further says that one set of 'dharma' is prescribed for men in the Kṛta age, other ones in the Tretā and the Dvāpara, and again another set in the Kali, in proportion, as those ages decrease in length.[5] The theorizing spirit behind Manu's correlation of social changes and the 'dharma' speaks of his psychological insight into group behaviour. The process of cultural evolution advances with violent changes bringing serious deviations in social orders which demand systematizations for overcoming chaos and confusion. The same theory is elaborated in the Purāṇas. It is maintained that at the end of an age, confusions in social orders occur.[6] The Varṇāśrama system is meant for the establishment of righteousness and an orderly state of society.[7] But the theory of change in dharma corresponding to the age, as advanced in *Manusmṛti*, became a ready excuse to prohibit many earlier usages in the subsequent period. It was 'developed by later Smṛtis and commentators into a long list of nearly fifty-five forbidden usages of Kaliyuga (Kalivarjya).'[8]

3. Reiteration of the Varna Order

The author of the *Manusmṛti* says: 'The Brāhmaṇa, the Kṣatriya and the Vaiśya castes are the twice-born ones, but the fourth, the Śūdra, has one

[1] *Viṣ. Sm.*, 84.4.

[2] *Manu*, II.23.

[3] *Viṣ. P.*, II.3.9; *Kāmasūtra*, I.Vs.21; Fa-Hsien Tr. H.A., Giles, London, 1956, pp. 20-21, had extolled this land in many respects.

[4] *Manu*, I.84; *Mbh.*, XII.224.25-27. But at another place Manu (IX.301-302) would adjudge the relative character of the age according to the kings conduct. See also *Mbh.*, XII.139.10.

[5] *Manu*, I.85; *Mbh.*, XI.224, 26.

[6] *Viṣ.* P., 1.6.17, 30-31; *Vāyu P.*, 8.187ff.

[7] *Viṣ. P.*, I.6.32-33; *Vāyu P.*, 78.36, 161ff; *Bḍ. P.*, III.14.46.

[8] Aiyangar, *ASPSM*, p. 37.

birth only; and there is no fifth (caste).[1] *Yājñavalkya Smṛti* gives the same social orders.[2] The Puruṣasūkta theory of the origin of the four classes permeates in Manu and the *Mahābhārata* also.[3] The Varṇa system was given a superhuman validity. The authors of our age, like those of the later Vedic period, assign the Varṇa orders even to the divinities.[4] The Varṇāśrama is testified by Vātsyāyana to be an established system of the society.[5]

The Economic Function of the Varṇa Structure: Remedy of the Disorder of Kali Age

The *Matsya Purāṇa*[6] expressly gives the idea of the cherished view of the contemporary orthodox circles, that the establishment of the Varṇa duties brings the society back from chaos, contributing to the better economic prospects, especially boosting up the agriculture, which signify the return of Kṛta Age.

In the Kali Age, which signifies the disappearance of Śrauta and Smārta dharma, drought adversely affects trade and commerce.[7] The paucity of food-grains makes the people subsist on roots, fruits, flesh, and fish.[8] The indiscriminate non-vegetarianism reduces the people to one social order.[9] But in course of time these subsistence too are exhausted.[10] The chaos of the age is overcome in Satyayuga whose start is marked by the re-establishment of Varṇa system and the promulgation of the Śrauta and Smārta duties by the sages. The people are put to action which leads to the ascendency of dharma and the production of varieties of food-grains[11] in abundance. Thus the social philosophy of the élite seems to be that the proper operation of the Varṇa dharma creates the Satyayuga conditions of economic prosperity. In fact when Manu (VIII.418) writes that the deviations of the Vaiśyas and Śūdras from their respective duties throw the entire world into confusion he must have been estimating the danger of such a social situation to the Varṇa-based economy. Both these classes being the very backbone of the economic life of the society, they were to be made to perform their time-honoured duties even by using the coercive power of the state.

[1] *Manu*, X.4.
[2] *Yāj.*, I.10; cf. *Viṣ. P.*, I. 12.62-64; *Vāyu. P.*, 9.121.
[3] *Manu*, I. 31; I.87; *Rāmāy.*, III.14.29; *Mbh.*, BE. XII.71.6.8; cf. the other theories of the origin of the Varṇa system in *Bṛ. Up.*, I.4.11-15; *Mbh.*, XII.181.1-17; *Viṣ. P.*, I. 12.62-64; *Vāyu. P.*, 9.121ff.
[4] *Mbh.*, XII.201.22f.; *Vāyu. P.*, 30.67.
[5] *Kāmasūtra*, I. 2.31; cf. Chakladar, *Social Life in . . . Kāmasūtra*, pp. 73-74.
[6] *Mat. P.*, Ch. 143.
[7] ibid, 143.70-72.
[8] ibid, 143.72-73.
[9] ibid, 143.76-77.
[10] ibid, 143.78-82.
[11] ibid. *P.*, Ch. 143.

The Varṇa structure must have had a prositive role to play in the economic life of the society. It is noteworthy that the Brāhmaṇa authors were laying down laws in a society which had at its lower level a number of tribal or semi-tribal people who had not fully taken up the advanced agriculture practised in the higher culture of the Varṇa fold. The legendary account of the king Pṛthu, although interlaced with diverse aspects of culture, makes unfailing suggestion that the basic motive of the authors in formulating this myth was the expansion of agriculture especially in the tribal regions.[1] At another place we find a general dictum[2] that wise men apply themselves to agriculture and tillage, and the acquisition of crops .." Increased production in itself does not seem to have been taken to offer any solution to the social disorder. In the reassertion of the Varṇa dharma, what appears to be plausibly implied was its social distribution also on the plane of ideologies laid down by the upper strata of the society. It is said[3] that wealth should be enjoyed by distributing it through gifts or performance of sacrifice. The king, and the members of different castes, and artisans must have been sharing the produce according to their traditional claims;[4] Brāhmaṇas' share had to come through gifts and honorarium for conducting domestic and other rituals etc.

Duties of the Varṇas

The Varṇa system was essentially based on the functional division of society. The authors of our age planned the standardization of the social order by accepting the traditional class duties of the individuals. Manu reiterates the traditional duties of Brāhmaṇas viz., teaching and study (of the Vedas), sacrificing for his own benefit and for others, and giving and accepting gifts; those of the Kṣatriyas as protection of the people, bestowing gifts, offering sacrifices, study of the Vedas and abstaining from attachment to the gratification of the senses; those of Vaiśyas as tending cattle, bestowing gifts, offering sacrifices, studying the Vedas, trading, lending money and cultivation of the land; and only one duty of the Śūdras, i.e., service to the other three varṇas without ill-feeling.[5] These are said to be the 'Karmas' assigned by the Lord to the four Varṇas. These were the standard social functions of the four classes which obliged the individuals to have active social interrelation on the basis of 'Varṇadharma.' This also made the classes interdependent. We will subsequently see its implications.

[1] *Mbh.*, BE. XII. Ch. 59.
[2] ibid, XII.229.7.
[3] ibid, XII.60.11.
[4] ibid, XII.327.57-60; ibid, XII.329.17ff; XII.90.2ff; XII.130.3-9; XII.327.48-50.
[5] *Manu*, I.88-91; cf. *Viṣ. P.*, III.8.21ff; *Mat. P.*, 38.3.

4. Claims of Superior Status for Brahmanas

The positive heterodox challenge against Brāhmaṇas' claims and pretensions was met with added vigour in our age. Brāhmaṇa authors made assertions of their status even without any reference to the Varṇa system. Manu declares: 'of all created beings the most excellent are said to be those which are animated; of the animated, those which subsist by intelligence; of the intelligent, mankind; and of men, the Brāhmaṇa.'[1] Being sprung from the superior part (mouth) of Brahma and as he is the first-born, and possesses the Vedas, he is by right the lord of this whole creation.[2] In claiming a superior status for the Brāhmaṇa on the ground of his being first-born, the Upaniṣadic theory[3] that the Brāhmaṇa alone existed in the beginning seems to be alluded to. The *Mahābhārata* too gives this theory of Varṇa origin and says that other Varṇas came to be differentiated on account of the differences in Karma.[4] Manu held that as the Brāhmaṇa is the protector of the treasury of law he is the lord of all created beings.[5] Whatever exists in this world is his property.[6]

Further, these authors assert the conception of the Brāhmaṇa's divinity in traditional tone.[7] He is held as a human god,[8] a visible deity on the earth.[9] Manu goes to the extreme when he says that a Brāhmaṇa by the very fact of his birth is an object of worship even to the deities.[10] The *Mahābhārata* forwards the same dictum.[11] The shortcomings of the Vrata, austerities, and sacrificial rites are eradicated when Brāhmaṇas support them. Brāhmaṇas' words are the words of gods. They have all gods in them.[12] This conception of Brāhmaṇas' divinity was developed to the extent of the sanctity of their person. The Brāhmaṇa is a great divinity, just like fire, who is not contaminated even in burial-places.[13] Any abusive word uttered to him requires expiation by purificatory rites.[14] It is purifying to have speech with him.[15] Even staking of his life by the lowest caste in order to rescue a Brāhmaṇa out of danger brings him back heavenly bliss.[16]

[1] *Manu*, I. 96.
[2] ibid, I. 93.
[3] *Br. Up.* I.4.11-15.
[4] *Mbh.*, XII.181.10-14.
[5] *Manu*, I.99.
[6] ibid, I.100.
[7] *ŚBr.*, I.2.1.6; *AĀr.*, III.1.3; *Ch. Up.*, II.20.2.
[8] *Manu*, IX.317; cf. *Mbh.*, XIII.137.21(a).
[9] *Viṣ. Sm.*, I.19; XIX.20-22; *Vāyu P.*, 83.21ff; *Bḍ. P.*, III.19.21.
[10] *Manu*, XI.85.
[11] XII.39.38; ibid, BE. XIII.35.21.
[12] *Parāśara*, VI.52-53.
[13] *ĀDS*, II.5.12.6-7; cf. *Manu*, IX.317-318.
[14] *Viṣ. Sm.*, 48.22.
[15] *Hir. Gṛ. Sūtra*, I.5.17.6.
[16] *Manu*, VIII.349; X.62; *Mbh.*, XIII.48.33-35; *Viṣ. Sm.*, 16.18.

These provisions form a militant assertion of the Brāhmaṇas' superior status. This spirit seems to be a reaction against the challenge of heterodoxy, which was made all the more trying for the orthodoxy by the chaotic social conditions after the fall of the Mauryas. The end of the Kṣatriya rule and recurrent foreign invasions had turned the situation from bad to worse for the orthodox society in general and the Brāhmaṇas in particular. The blunt assertion of Brāhmaṇas divinity without distinctions of the learned and ignoble ones[1] speaks of a situation against which it is directed. A reaction to the oppression of the Brāhmaṇas, as portrayed in the Kali age descriptions, seems to be reflected when Manu says: who would prosper, while he injures those (men) who, provoked to anger, could create other worlds and other guardians of the world, and deprive the gods of their divine station.[2] The same reaction is found in the *Mahābhārata:*[3] 'a Brāhmaṇa, when provoked, becomes fire, Sun, poison and weapon.' A similar spirit is shown in the Purāṇas.[4] The declaration[5] that Brāhmaṇas are the best among bipeds directly controverts, it seems, the Buddhist assertion that Kṣatriyas are the best of the bipeds.[6] Thus, we find that the Brāhmaṇas in our period made a great attempt to establish the status of their class in the society. This situation was created by an intense antagonism against that class which invited its positive response. The Brāhmaṇic authors did not remain satisfied in claiming their old usual status but tried to achieve for their class, a status for superior and comprehensive in comparison to what was asserted in the old Brāhmaṇa literature.

Much arrogance and vanity are visible in the Brāhmaṇas self-assertions. But we should not forget that the general social background of the period in which contemporary authors were attempting the standardization of the social order was in no way less challenging to orthodoxy. Moreover, Brāhmaṇas' attempt at social systematization must have required of them a consciousness of their own traditional class-status as a driving force in handling the problems besetting the orthodox society. The part played by them in the preservation of the orthodox culture from the Vedic period onwards was a factor which called them to respond against antagonism, and at the same time made them increasingly conscious of their own class-status. Therefore, their role depended as much on their status, as their claim for that status was dependent on their role in society.

The Basis of Status Evaluation

The priestly section of the Brāhmaṇa class has been a very important factor in society. The priestly functions, monopolised by them, were

[1] *Manu*, IX.317-319.
[2] ibid, IX.315.
[3] *Mbh.*, 1.24.4 (a)
[4] *Mat. P.*, 30.23; *Viṣ. P.*, III.9.20-21.
[5] *Mbh.*, IV.2.12; V.6.1-3; cf. *Manu*, I.96.
[6] vide *supra*, p. 16.

among the six standard duties of the class. Mastery over elaborate priest-craft and the sole custodianship of ritualism gave this class not only a unity but at the same time placed it in a superior position to the rest of the classes in ritual matters. Ritualism was so much closely allied with the social status that the right to the Vedic sacraments and rites became the basis of the twice-born class structure. An eminent sociologist holds the view[1] that "in the caste system the primary emphasis is on status evaluation on ritual plane . . . . A Kṣatriya king may be powerful and a Vaiśya trader may be rich, but their ritual status will be rated lower than that of the poorest Brāhmaṇa." This was undoubtedly a vital basis of the Brāhmaṇas' claim for superiority.

But there was still another factor which not only served as the basis of status evaluation but gave the Brāhmaṇas a moral stature before other classes. This is status evaluation on a spiritual plane.[2] In a philosophic interpretation of the word 'Brahman,' it was said that one who knows the doctrine of 'Brahman' is Brāhmaṇa. This theory in turn frees the Brāhmaṇa class from the priestly confinements together with all its features like violence in sacrifice, greed, dependence on kings and nobility, etc. and leads to the formation of a section of the Brāhmaṇas which attempted at God's realization, practised penance, austerities, meditation and lived a rigorously ethical life. They followed the doctrine of detachment and even renunciation, embracing asceticism. These two categories of the Brāhmaṇas neatly correspond to doctrinal differentiations of Pravṛtti and Nivṛtti paths. Our period was dominated by both the types of Brāhmaṇas, though, side by side a doctrinal synthesis was also reached at.[3]

In the *Manusmṛti* itself we find status evaluation on a spiritual plane. Manu lays down that wealth, kindred, age, rites and sacred knowledge (*Vidyā*) make a man respectful but each of the latter-named carries more weight than the preceding ones. Among the members of the three upper Varṇas whosoever has greater amount of these five qualities deserves greater respect.[4]

Again, enumerating the comperative superiority of the Brāhmaṇas' attributes he says that "of Brāhmaṇas, those learned (in the Vedas), of learned, those who recognise (the necessity and manner of performing the prescribed duties); of those who possess this knowledge, those who per-

[1]Dube, *Women in the New Asia*, ed. Barabara C. Ward, Unesco, 1963, p. 176.

[2]'Spiritual Status' is taken to be referring to that position of the Brāhmaṇas which was based on Upaniṣadic discipline. The Brāhmaṇas who cultivated or led an ethical or moral life, in consonance with the general attributes of the Brahmavādins of the Upaniṣadic tradition are found in the Epic and Purāṇic literature. The 'spiritual status' could not necessarily be taken as contrary to the ritual-status. This philosophy of life lay greater emphasis on the ethical and spiritual values rather than ritualistic observances of the Śrauta and Smārta traditions.

[3]Pravṛttam ca nivṛttam ca dvividham Karma vaidikam. *Manu*, XII.88 (b); also XII.89-90.

[4]*Manu*, II.136-37(a).

form them; of the performers, those who know the Brahman,"[1] are the most excellent ones. Here we find that Manu, while emphasizing ritualistic functions of the Brāhmaṇas, gives precedence to the Upaniṣadic trend holding the Brahmavādin Brāhmaṇa supreme in status. The *Mahābhārata* also says that the Brāhmaṇa is the highest light, he is the highest 'tapas.'[2] Theoretically the attempt of coordination of these two planes of status evaluation, as in the above-mentioned passage of Manu, makes the Brāhmaṇa's position much elevated. It is rightly observed:[3] ". . . . . when the Vedic gods were resolved in an ultimate principle immanent in nature, or, as is the case of Prajapati, represented as a personification of the creative process, the priestly offering as the all-sustaining rite gave the Brahmins their unique position in the cosmic order and social structure, transcending that of the gods."

The authors asserted the superior status of the Brāhmaṇas as traditionally sanctioned. It can be well said that once again in our age the 'ascribed' status was assigned to the Brāhmaṇas as it was not 'left over to be filled through competition.'[4] However, even this 'ascribed' status required attempt at integration and consolidation. Further, the co-ordination of the two bases of status evaluation was not less important. The ritualistic criterion of status has its own advantages. The spiritual status could not provide homogeneity to the Brāhmaṇa class to the extent accorded by priestly functions. Besides, the spiritual knowledge and ascetic view of life could not be absolutely the monopoly of the Brāhmaṇas for even a Kṣatriya or a Vaiśya or, in some cases, even a Śūdra could sacrifice his worldly attachments in favour of self-abnegation.[5]

5. Occupation of Brāhmaṇas

Caste itself was decided by birth but its adjustment to specific occupation had been a testing problem before our authors. Three out of the six duties of the Brāhmaṇas, viz. teaching, conducting sacrifices for others and receiving gifts, were exclusively allotted to them, which could bring them subsistence. These were, obviously,not regular means to grant them any economic security. So law-givers prescribe other means in addition to these three. But the image and status of the Brāhmaṇa were always kept in view. Being the friends of all creatures,[6] their means of subsistence should be fair, not causing pain to others.[7] They are to follow irreproachable occupations to

[1] *Manu*, I.97; vide *SBE*, XXV, p. 25; cf. Radhakrishnan, *The Hindu View of Life*, 1927, pp. 22.

[2] *Mbh.*, BE.XIII.33.17 (a)

[3] E. O. James, *The Nature and Function of Priesthood*, p. 290.

[4] Linton, 'Status And Role, vide *Sociological Theory*, ed. by Lewis A. Coser and B. Rosenberg, 1965, p. 360; see also pp. 358ff.

[5] see *infra*, p. 130.

[6] *Manu*, II. 87; *Viṣ. Sm.*, 56. 21; *Viṣ. P.*, III.8.25.

[7] *Mbh.*, BE. XII.60.8ff.

accumulate property, that too for bare subsistence.[1] A Brāhmaṇa should not resort to the ways of the world for his subsistence.[2] Accordingly, it is laid down that a Brāhmaṇa may subsist by Ṛta (truth), i.e., gleaning of corn; Amṛta (ambrosia), i.e., unasked gift; Mṛta (deaths), i.e., begging; Pramṛta (what causes many death), i.e., agriculture; or even by Satyānṛta (a mixture of truth and falsehood), i.e., trade and money lending but never by Śvavṛtti (a dog's mode of life), i.e., service.[3] Those Brāhmaṇas who observe vows, recite Gāyatrī, perform sacrifices qualify for the śrāddha invitation although they may be agriculturists (Karṣakāḥ).[4] The moral restrictions allowing only lean sources of subsistence were bound to make their practical life hard enough, compelling them to deviate from their ideals even in normal times. But the social situations of the age under our study, so seriously obsessed by socio-political disturbances which made particularly the entire period an age of emergency, were hardly favourable for the smooth observance of the orthodox precepts. Grave deviations from prescribed duties by all the classes in general and Brāhmaṇas in particular are described which were serious enough to threaten the very structure of the orthodox society.

Besides the social deviations of the Brāhmaṇa class as found in the Jātaka stories and the Kali age account, the *Mahābhārata* makes the specific mention of some serious deviations which reduced them to a very low status. It is said that those Brāhmaṇas who are not well born and do not follow the duties of their order, and are addicted to evil practices are like Śūdras.[5] Those who are employed in the law-courts for summoning the people, those who perform worship for others to gain money, those who perform the sacrifices of Vaiśyas, and Śūdras, those who officiate in sacrifice on behalf of a whole village, and those who make voyages on the ocean—these five are regarded as cāṇḍālas among Brāhmaṇas.[6] Those who ride on horses or elephants or cars or become foot-soldiers, become equal to Vaiśyas.[7] Such violations of the standard Varnadharma must have been a great problem to the contemporary law-givers. Curbing of such deviations seems to be of paramount importance to them. In the Brāhmaṇic attempt to standardize the class behaviour, only the assertion

[1] *Manu*, IV.3.
[2] ibid, IV.11.
[3] ibid, IV.4-6; cf. *ĀDS*, II.10.4.
[4] *Mbh.*, XIII.23.24.
[5] ibid, XII.77.6.
[6] ibid, XII.77.8; see also Nilakaṇṭha's commentary thereunder.
[7] ibid, XII.77.5; *The Atri Saṃhitā* (373.) enumerates ten types of Brāhmaṇs resembling the god, seer, dvija (i.e., the Brāhmaṇa proper), king, Vaiśya, Śūdra, Niṣāda, animal, mleccha, Cāṇḍala; (Devo munirdvijo rājā vaiśyaḥ śūdro niṣādakaḥ paśūmleccho'pi cāṇḍālo viprā daśavidhāḥ).

The counterpart of such Brāhmaṇas are found in modern times also; vide Senart, *Caste in India*, tr. Ross, London, 1930, pp. 35-36.

of the traditional social order was not enough, although it was the primary need of the time. They made certain special provisions, quite in accordance with traditional rules, either to curb deviations or, if necessary, to accord them legal sanction and support occupational digressions under abnormal situations. In fact, the laws for emergency are highly essential for the smooth functioning of any social system. Talcott Parsons observes:[1] "There is evidence that every social system possesses more or less well-developed "secondary" defences against deviance, with either or both of two immediate functions: either to bring a person back to line by processes inaccessible to ordinary social relationships, or, where this fails to insulate him from reciprocal influence on others so that he becomes at least relatively harmless." An account of these measures adopted by the Brāhmaṇic authors is given below.

Kings' Support

Law-givers lay down the first set of special provisions exhorting the king to provide the learned Brāhmaṇas with subsistence.[2] They are entitled to seek their livelihood from the king.[3] It is said that drought and epidemic destroy the realm of that king in whose reign a 'śrotriya' dies of starvation.[4] And alternatively, that king attains heavenly bliss who bestows landed property upon the Brāhmaṇa, nay, he earns greater rewards in case he is slain in an attempt to rescue the lost property of a Brāhmaṇa.[5]

The Theory of Āpaddharma

The social division into classes by birth-decided membership, entailing special duties, privileges, and status on the members of each class, could not easily be reconciled to occupational variations of members of the particular class. Despite the familial bond of hereditary occupation, social circumstances may not have always been helpful to an individual in following the parental vocation. Personal liking and aptitude also must have been a factor of considerable importance in this matter. But deviation would make an individual only a nominal member of his class. If this tendency was allowed to develop to a large proportion in periods of crises, the whole structure of the social system might break down. In the Śānti Parva[6] it is expressly mentioned that the divine beings, the Brāhmaṇas, and the great ṛṣis fearing death in the period of distress, do not scruple to have recourse to the provisions laid down in the scriptures as the *alternatives*. It seems that in order to harmonize the opposite pulls between birth-decided class-membership and deviation-bound actual vocation in

[1]Parsons, Talcott, *Essays in Sociological Theory*, 1963, p. 152.
[2]*Manu*, VII.82, VII.83; *Yaj.*, III.44.
[3]*GDS*, IX. 63; cf. *Yāj.*, I, 100; cf. *Viṣ. Sm.*, 63.1.
[4]*Manu*, VII.134; cf. VII.135; cf. *ĀDS*, II.10.25.11.
[5]ibid, VII.83-84; *Yāj.*, I.314; *ĀDS*, IX.323.
[6]*Mbh.*, XII.159.14-17.

practice, the social thinkers of our period devised the theory of 'Āpaddharma' which was a great asset to them in their task of social standardization.

Āpaddharma: Provision for Personal Distress

A closer analysis of the 'āpaddharma' provisions shows us that special laxities in ideal means of subsistence and duty were granted in two sets of crises, i.e., 'Personal Distress' and 'Cultural Crisis.'[1] The provisions under personal distress seem to be concerned directly with an individual's own problems, created either by unfavourable social circumstances or by his own incapabilities or disabilities to earn livelihood by his normal vocation,[2] even in absence of any major crisis in society. The want of standard means of subsistence is taken to create personal distress.[3] Laxity is granted in case of any distress involving the danger of the loss of life on account of hunger.[4] Such a distress is also created by calamities like drought etc. We find a pathetic description of the dreadful condition of famine when even ṛṣis would walk fireless and homeless, without caring for pure and impure food. A ṛṣi like Viśvāmitra had to demand food from a cāṇḍāla.[5] Thus a major crisis may also create personal distress. In order to give this provision a traditional sanctity, Manu illustrates the instances of ancient ṛṣis, like Ajīgarta, Vāmadeva, Bhāradvāja and Viśvāmitra, who, pressed by the danger of starvation, resorted to unhealthy means of subsistence without incurring any sin therefrom.[6] But the 'āpaddharma' provision was strictly meant for critical times and if it was resorted to or retained in normal times, the persons concerned would not gain merit in the next world.[7]

Our authors have enlisted several means of subsistence to be adopted in distress. Manu gives ten such means viz. learning, mechanical arts, work for wages, service, rearing cattle, trade, agriculture, fortitude, alms, and receiving interest on money.[8] In Yājñavalkya's provisions, the seven means of livelihood are the same with the addition of cart (on hire), mountain (collecting grass and fuel on hills for sale), getting subsistence from a country full of water, trees and shrubs, and king's support.[9] Most of these means were allowed to the upper Varṇas with due restrictions in cases of Brāhmaṇas and Kṣatriyas.

Manu lays down that in case a Brāhmaṇa fails to secure subsistence by

[1] vide *infra*, Ch. 8, Āpaddharma: Provision for Cultural Crisis.
[2] *Manu*, X.81(a).
[3] ibid, X.85; cf. X. 101f. and *Yaj.*, III.35.
[4] *Manu*, X.104(a).
[5] *Mbh.*, XIII.139.25-27.
[6] *Manu*, X.105-108.
[7] ibid, XI.28.
[8] ibid, X.116.
[9] *Yāj.*, III.42.

his own vocation he can lawfully adopt the profession of the Kṣatriya or Vaiśya.[1] The *Mahābhārata* also gives the same rule.[2] The profession of arms by a Brāhmaṇa had been an anathema to the authors in normal times but was allowed[3] under the circumstances of emergency. Our authors allow all the three Varṇas to take up arms in order to save their lives.[4] An early Dharmaśāstra writer would prefer the profession of the Vaiśya to be taken up by a Brāhmaṇa in times of distress because a Kṣatriyas' dharma is considered to be too violent for him.[5] But Manu seems to prefer the Kṣatriya's profession than that of the Vaiśya.[6]

Restrictions in Laxity

While allowing the Vaiśyas' means of livelihood, viz. agriculture, trade, etc., to a Brāhmaṇa and a Kṣatriya certain restrictions were imposed, supposedly to make these means compatible with the status of these two upper classes. Agriculture being regarded as the exclusive occupation of the Vaiśyas, it was deemed to be inconsistent with the study of the Vedas.[7] It was open to them in the Vedic times[8] but later on was allowed to the Brāhmaṇas, only when they could be engaged in it without impairing their Vedic studies, otherwise agriculture was to be given up.[9] But Manu's disapproval of agriculture is based on a different argument. He exhorts a Brāhmaṇa or a Kṣatriya to avoid it because injury to many sentient beings is involved in it and, further, it is dependent on others, i.e., labourers and oxen etc.[10] We find that while the argument of Baudhāyana is based on practical difficulties inherent in agriculture, Manu gives an idealistic explanation accepting the precept of non-violence which seems to be an influence of the Buddhist movement.[11]

Likewise, trade, though allowed in distress, was conditioned by the interdiction of dealing in certain articles like cooked food, sesamum, stones, salt, cattle, human beings, dyed cloth and cloth made of hemp or flax or wool, fruits, roots, medical herbs, water, weapons, prison, meat, soma (liquor), perfumes of all kinds, milk, butter, oil, wax, sugar, beads of the forest, birds, indigo, lac and all one-hoofed beasts, iron etc.[12] Some of these restrictions

[1] *Manu*, X.82; *Yāj*., III.35; *VDS*, II.22; *GDS*, VIII.6-7.
[2] *Mbh*., XII.79. 1-2; *Viṣ. P*., III.8.39.
[3] vide under 'Āpaddharma': Provision for Cultural Crisis,' *infra*, Ch. 8.
[4] *VDS*, III.24: cf. *GDS*, VII.2.5.
[5] *BDS*, II.2.4.16-17.
[6] *Manu*, X.81-82.
[7] *BDS*, I.5.101.
[8] *ṚV*, X.34.13.
[9] *BDS*, I.5.10.31; *Manu*, X.83-84; cf. *BDS*, II.2.82-83.
[10] *Manu*, X.83; see also X.84; cf. *BDS*, II.2.82-83.
[11] cf. *Parāśara*, II.2, 12-13.
[12] *Manu*, X.81-89; *Yāj*., III.32-39; cf. *VDS*, II.24ff; *GDS*, VII.8-15; *ĀDS*, I.7.20; 12-13; cf. Udyoga Parva, 38.5; Śānti Parva, 79.4-6.

were not applicable to Kṣatriyas.[1] But sesamum is allowed for barter.[2] The authors have further given the rule that in case these articles are sold by a Brāhmaṇa he incurs the sin of Upapātaka which requires prayaścitta to absolve the sin.[3] Nārada would have a Brāhmaṇa resorting to the sale of forbidden article in normal times punished by the king.[4]

There must have been some traditional stigma or taboo attached to the articles like salt, oil, liquor, iron etc. which was responsible for the interdiction of their trade by the Brāhmaṇas. For instance, iron, originally a secret technology even among the Hittites, must have been held as containing some magical propensity. A belief visualizing evil forces in this metal would subsequently identify it with Saturn. But what appears to be the most significant point is that the concept of sin is utilized to prohibiting any encroachment of the Brāhmaṇas or Kṣatriyas on the traditional callings of the Vaiśya class. It must have exerted considerable influence to keep the class structure stratified distinctly.

In the same way Brāhmaṇas and Kṣatriyas were discouraged from money-lending even in the time of distress.[5] Usury was not considered to be becoming of them.

Gift

Gift, as we have seen, was one of the prominent means to procure merit in the Kaliyuga.[6] Gift from proper donors was a standard means of subsistence for the Brāhmaṇas. But in times of distress some laxity was allowed to meet the situation. A starving Brāhmaṇa is permitted to accept gifts from any proper twice-born[7] and, in case he fails to get sufficient gift for his maintenance, he could accept the same from any one, even from a Śūdra and Antyaja.[8] But this laxity was allowed only for subsistence and not for performance of religious acts. Śūdra's help in sacrifice would make a Brāhmaṇa Cāṇḍāla in the next birth.[9] This conservative spirit of Manu is rendered mild by Yājñavalkya, as he allows acceptance of gift from all in order to meet the expenses of religious undertakings and clear the dues of the preceptor and servants.[10] Most law-givers seem to be unanimous in permitting a distressed Brāhmaṇa to accept gift from all men, excepting the mortal sinners, for feeding his parents and dependents and appeasing gods, for the completion of sacrifice and to meet the expense of marriage.[11]

[1] *GDS*, VII.15.
[2] *Yāj.*, III.39; *Nārada*, I.66; cf. *Manu*, X.90.
[3] *Manu*, XI.62; *Yāj.*, III.265; *Viṣ. Sm.*, 37.14.
[4] *Nārada*, I.67; cf. *Manu*, X.117.
[5] *Nārada*, I.111.
[6] vide *supra*, pp. 63-64.
[7] *Manu*, IV.34; cf. *Yāj.*, I.13; *VDS*, XII.2.
[8] ibid, X.102-110; cf. *Yāj.*, III.41.
[9] ibid, XI.24; cf. *Yāj.*, I.127.
[10] *Yāj.*, I.216.
[11] *GDS*, XVIII.24; cf. *VDS*, VII.26ff; *Manu*, IV.251; *Viṣ. Sm.*, 57.13; *Yāj.*, I.127.

In this connection the dictum of Manu is strange. He lays down that for such purposes a wealthy Vaiśya or Śūdra, not performing his religious duties, is not to be asked for a gift but his wealth is to be appropriated by force or theft which does not amount to be a sinful act.[1]

Towards the end of our period the gift of land became an object of special praise of the authors. Yājñavalkya[2] extols the gift of land capable of yielding a crop or fruits. The gift of cows, land, and knowledge is held as superior[3] ones, while *Anuśāsan Parva* (62.2) praises land grant as surpassing all other gifts. It is said that whatever sins a king commits in bringing the earth under his control, gift of cows in thousands, and that of land, purifies him.[4] Bestowing[5] Brāhmaṇas with gifts of gold, cows, and land secures deliverance even to the wicked.

The land grants to the Brāhmaṇas seem to be of immense socio-cultural importance. It created a class of Brāhmaṇa landlords in subsequent times and gave economic power to this section of the Brāhmaṇas. By accelerating the cultivation of virgin land it must have added vigour to the process of acculturation of the primitive people. The socialization of the values and norms of the orthodox culture specially in the newly colonized regions would certainly make the people submissive to the political power. The supreme duty of a king, according to Kauṭilya, was to establish his subjects in their respective traditional occupations (Svadharma) by the regulations of the state. But it is also laid down that by propagating the different branches of knowledge, the people should be led to cultivate disciple.[6] Through the gifts of riches to the proper persons, kings should win over the affection of the people.[7] It is said in the *Anuśāsana Parva* that peace prevails in the kingdom[8] if Brāhmaṇas are pleased by various means of gifts, respect etc. In fact, the land grants appear to be one of the most significant institutions reared with a purpose to pushing forward the Neo-Orthodox culture, having agriculture as its base.

The non-canonical works of our period also speak highly of gifts to Brāhmaṇas but as most of the works were composed by the Brāhmaṇas themselves, they must have given somewhat inflated importance to gifts bestowed by the kings and princes upon the Brāhmaṇas. Bhāsa says that a king should bestow his whole wealth on the Brāhmaṇa.[9] Vātsyāyana says that blessings of the Brāhmaṇas were regarded as a means to long life and glory and it had been the desire of a lady to endow a gift of a thousand

[1]*Manu*, XI.11-13.
[2]*Yāj.*, 1.210-11.
[3]*Manu*, IV. 233; cf. *VDS*, XXIX.19; *Yāj.*, 1.212.
[4]Vana Parva, 93.78-79; cf. Anuśāsana Parva, 62.19.
[5]*Mbh.*, XIII.59.5.
[6]*KArth.*, I. Ch. 7.
[7]ibid, I.7.1-2.
[8]*Mbh.*, XIII.136.11; see also ibid, BE. XIII.151.11.
[9]*Pañcarātra*, I.22(b).

cows to the Brāhmaṇa.[1] Sacrificers used to bestow heavy riches upon the Brāhmaṇas at the end of sacrifices.[2] Aśvaghoṣa says that Buddha's father gave with full courtesy rich gifts to the best of the twice-borns, wishing that his son might become lord of the earth, as prophesied, and that he should not retire to the forest before attaining old age.[3] In the *Karṇabhāra-nāṭaka* Bhāsa mentions[4] Karṇa's gifts of a thousand horses of the reputed Kamboja breed, of countless herds of elephants . . . and golds of the vanquished earth. In the *Mahāvastu* it is said that 'twenty thousand Brāhmaṇas always eat at the king's table, and day and night they are ever honoured and esteemed.'[5] We shall see the epigraphic testimony on the point subsequently.[6]

Despite such pictures of fabulous wealth being bestowed upon the Brāhmaṇas, especially the priestly section, the general spirit of our authors was to keep this class within the limits of the ideals of simplicity laid down for them. Hoarding of property,[7] begging[8] and accepting[9] gifts from improper donors were discouraged. Manu declares that though a Brāhmaṇa could lawfully accept gifts, nevertheless he should not indulge in this means, time and again, as it leads to the loss of his spiritual power.[10] Yājñavalkya also lays down the ideal that non-acceptance of gifts secures the highest world for the Brāhmaṇas.[11] A Brāhmaṇa who does not make any provision of food for the morrow is the best one and he could conquer the world more completely.[12] The provisions of the law-givers, especially of Manu, lay great importance on the contented life of a Brāhmaṇa observing austerities, simplicity, and greedlessness. Further, the law-givers tend to curb the number of the Brāhmaṇa invitees to Śraddha feasts lest it may be a strain on the 'Yajamāna'.[13] It is likely that, apart from those priests who got riches from kings and nobility or who deviated from the ideal means of their livelihood in favour of wealth and prosperity, the Brāhmaṇas dogmatically following the prescribed ideals of life would have been destitute figures,[14] although honoured in society. In fact, their status, and correspondingly their role, depended not on wealth and ambition but on austerity and simplicity. It is rightly observed, "In spite of all their preachings for gifts, the Brāhmaṇa seems never to have ignored the ideal life of

[1] *Kāmasūtra*, VI.5.25.
[2] *Pañcarātra*, I.4; *Avimāraka*, I.2.
[3] *Buddhacarita*, I.48.
[4] *Karṇabhāra*, I.19-20, 21.
[5] *Mahāvastu*, III, p. 21.
[6] vide *infra*, Ch. 8.
[7] *Mbh.*, XIII.61.19; cf. BE. XIII.69.19.
[8] *Manu*, X.109; cf. *Rāmāy.*, I.6.13; *Mbh.*, BE. XIII.141.66; *Manu*, IV.3.
[9] ibid, IV.84; IV.61.
[10] ibid, IV.186.
[11] *Yāj.*, I.213; cf. *Manu*, IV.191.
[12] *Manu*, IV.7-8.
[13] ibid, III.125-126; cf. *Yāj.*, I.22.
[14] What seems to be traditionally symbolized by Sudāmā, *Bhāg. P.* X. Ch. 80.

simplicity and asceticism."[1] We have to believe that "normally, the position of the typical Brāhmaṇa householder, who is a man of virtue and learning, is that of a comparatively poor man."[2] Their circumstances and their typical mode of life induced the authors of our age to extol gifts to the Brāhmaṇas. It is truly said by Hopkins: "They did not live in monasteries like the Buddhists. They did not draw salaries like the Christians. All that they had to live on was what was given them. They were not permitted to earn a living by worldly means. No wonder they were always rather profuse in praising gifts."[3]

Thus, we find that the theory of Āpaddharma was a very useful means to meet any situation of emergency in the society without endangering the standards of the varṇa system. It can well be said that this theory might have been a ready pretext to justify occupational digressions of the society of our period, disturbed by major and minor wars and troubles creating a condition of distress. But the authors, at the same time, do not allow any misuse of the provisions. Besides, it is universally ordained that the performance of one's own 'dharma' though half done, is far better in giving merit than performing others' completely.[4] Further, one of the most important points of the Āpaddharma theory was that a low caste individual was strictly prohibited to take up the vocation of higher castes. In case one resorted to it, the king was to deprive his wealth, banishing him immediately from the kingdom.[5]

6. The Image of True Brāhmaṇas

The claim of a superior status for the Brāhmaṇas, whether learned or ignoble, could hardly be justified on any valid ground. The theory of their being the first-born, or their origin from the superior part of Brahman's body in itself, had nothing of practical import to help them realise their claims. The magical or ritualistic power of the Brāhmaṇas was shaken by the heterodox challenge and could not have any unquestioned supremacy. In such a situation they gave inflated importance to the ethical way of life which a section of the Brāhmaṇa class was following ever since the Upaniṣadic times. The image of an ideal Brāhmaṇa as depicted by contemporary authors seems nothing but an imposition of heavy moral requirement on the Brāhmaṇa class, commensurate with their claims of superior status. This again could prove a great creative force in their role of acculturation and social standardization.

The *Mahābhārata* declares that righteousness, truthfulness, self-control, asceticism, lack of malice, performance of sacrificial ceremonies, gifts,

[1]Hazra, *Purāṇic Records on Hindu Rites and Customs*, p. 255.
[2]Aiyangar, *ASPSM*, pp. 16-17.
[3]Hopkins, *Ethics of India*, p. 148.
[4]*Manu*, X.97; cf. *Gītā*, XIII.45, 48.
[5]*Manu*, X.96; cf. *VDS*, II.23.

patience, learning, etc. are the vows of a Brāhmaṇa.[1] Likewise, in the *Bhagavadgītā* it is said that 'control of mind, control of the senses, austerities, purity, forgiveness, straightforwardness of mind and body, belief in God, the scriptures, and the other world, knowledge of the sacred lore and knowledge of God based on direct experience are the natural duties of the Brāhmaṇas.[2] *Gītā* seems to forward the view that the 'Sattva Guṇa' dominates in the Brāhmaṇa because we find that these qualities, mentioned as typical of the Brāhmaṇas' attributes, closely resemble the 'Sattva' (virtuous) elements as enumerated in it[3] and also in the *Manusmṛti*.[4] The *Anugītā* lays down that the dark shadow of ignorance, delusion, indecision, haughtiness, fear, malice, grief, irrationality, fading memory, dull intelligence, nihilistic belief, immoral conduct, false pride, evil disposition, faithlessness etc., lead a Brāhmaṇa to degeneration.[5] A true Brāhmaṇa, who possesses the qualities of penance, learning, true knowledge of the doctrine of metampsychosis of the world, of the nature of emancipation, of tranquility and of Brāhmaṇic glory gets absolved of the sins committed in his past life and achieves supreme bliss and reunion (with the divine).[6] The ignoble Brāhmaṇas are condemned outright. Such Brāhmaṇas are described as the fire of straw which is of no worth and elephant made of wood[7] etc. They fall to the status of the Śūdras together with their progeny.[8] Acceptance of gift by a Brāhmaṇa devoid of austerities and Vedic studies leads him to hell.[9]

These qualities and attributes of the Brāhmaṇas seek to present this class as an ideal in the society, which was to inculcate morality in the people by establishing friendly relations with them. An orthodox law-giver like Manu goes to the extreme to say that whether he performs the rites or neglects them, he who befriends all creatures is declared to be a true Brāhmaṇa.[10] The *Gautama Dharma Sūtra*[11] and the *Mahābhārata*[12] have expressed the same view almost in the same wordings. The *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* exhorts that a Brāhmaṇa should always strive to bring welfare to all the creatures. Friendship with all of them is his best treasure.[13] He should be friendly with everybody who comes in his contact.[14] It is the moral duty of a wealthy

[1] *Mbh.*, V.43.12; cf. BE. V.45.5ff.
[2] *Gītā*, XVIII.42.
[3] vide *Gītā*, XVI.1-3; XVII.8, 17; XVII.9, 23, 26 etc.
[4] *Manu*, XII.31; cf. *Viṣ. P.*, I.6.3-5.
[5] *Anugītā*, XXI.11; *SBE*, II, pp. 317ff.
[6] ibid, I.21; XI.34; XXI.11.
[7] *VDS*, II.11.
[8] *Manu*, II.168.
[9] *Manu*, IV.190-4; IV.191ff; XII.114-15; 392-93; *Viṣ. Sm.*, 93.8-10 and 12; *GDS*, XX.1.
[10] *Manu*, II.87(b).
[11] *GDS*, XXVI.11.
[12] *Mbh.*, XII.230.13(b).
[13] *Viṣ.P.*, III.8.24; *Mbh.*, BE. XIII.151.10-12; cf. *ĀDS*, I.8.23.1.
[14] *Mbh.*, XII.139.60f; ibid, XII.63.5.

Brāhmaṇa to support a beseeching Kṣatriya or a Vaiśya fallen in distress by giving him suitable work. If he neglects this provision, the king is enjoined upon to make the Brāhmaṇa observe the same.[1] But in case the initiated twice-borns are reduced to servitude against their will by the wealthy Brāhmaṇa, the latter is liable to the fine of six hundred paṇas.[2] It clearly shows that in spite of the claims of superiority in status for the Brāhmaṇa, he was not permitted to exploit the situation taking undue advantage of his position and wealth. It was emphatically asserted that only virtuous Brāhmaṇas could bring emancipation to the society.[3] The *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* lays down that Brāhmaṇa's physical birth is not meant for indulgence in worldly luxury and pleasure. It is, instead, to lead a hard life of austerities which brings him infinite bliss in the heaven.[4] The virtuous life of a Brāhmaṇa was so much emphasized that the *Mahābhārata* at places does not recognise Brāhmaṇahood by birth. It is said that, truthfulness, generosity, freedom from hatred and wickedness, humility, kindness, and tapas—in whomsoever these are seen, he is a Brāhmaṇa. In case these attributes are found in a Śūdra and not in a Dvija, then the Śūdra would not be Śūdra and the Brāhmaṇa would not be a Brāhmaṇa.[5] Even Cāṇḍālas with such attributes would be regarded as Brāhmaṇas by the gods.[6] This view resembles the Buddhist conception of Brāhmaṇahood but it would have been hardly palatable to the orthodox law-givers. Nevertheless, it shows the spirit of the age which held these qualities to be essential in a Brāhmaṇa. Patañjali gives a passage that, besides birth, the tapas and Vedic study were also the factors which made a man Brāhmaṇa.[7] There must always have been such Brāhmaṇas, may be only a residue of the large number of them, who zealously adhered to these ideals which became intimately identified with this class. Bhāsa informs that Brāhmaṇas, even in old ages, took to ever increasing vows and were devoted to the study of the Vedas.[8] They used to master various branches[9] of learning and practised penance and asceticism.[10] They are mentioned to be learned in the Vedas together with their six appendices, and that they performed the sixfold duty and led virtuous lives.[11] Kālidāsa also describes Brāhmaṇas observing the Upanayana ceremony,[12] earning by accepting dakṣiṇā and devoted to the

[1] *Manu*, VIII.411.

[2] ibid, VIII.412; vide also Commentators Medhātithi, Govindarāja, and Kullūka on the same.

[3] *VDS*, VI.25.

[4] *Bhāg. P.*, XI.17.42.

[5] *Mbh.*, XII.182.4 and 8; ibid, BE. III.313.108-11.

[6] *Vṛddha Gautama*, p. 632; cf. Kane, *HDŚ*, II, pt. II, p. 101.

[7] Patañjali on Pāṇini, II.26; vide *Mahābhāṣya*, I, p. 411, II, p. 362.

[8] *Pañcarātra* I.5(a).

[9] *Pratimā*, V.1ff.

[10] vide *infra*, pp. Ch. 6, Ch. 8.

[11] *Saundarānanda*, I.44.

[12] *Raghu.*, XII.64.

studies[1] of the Vidyàs (different branches of knowledge).[2] It must have been on account of their virtuous life that they were recognised to be superior in status in society[3] and were given due reverence.[4] People would bestow the best of their possessions in order to secure blessings of the Brāhmaṇas.[5]

In connection with the status and the image of the true Brāhmaṇas, the *Mahābhārata* gives us valuable information about the phenomenon of caste deviation. The passages[6] bring to our notice how the authors, supposedly representing the orthodox circles, viewed their relative status. For example, those Brāhmaṇas who take up the professions of ṛtvik, purohita, kings' councillor, envoy and messenger are said to have been reduced to the position of the Kṣatriyas.[7] This view seems somewhat strange as these offices were claimed by the law-givers for the Brāhmaṇas, which they could profess even as Brāhmaṇas. But this judgement seems to have been based on the criterion of status evaluation on the spiritual plane.

The elucidation of these contra-ideal types of Brāhmaṇas reduced to the position of Cāṇḍāla, Śūdra, Vaiśya etc., however, shows that while caste came to be based on birth, the actual status in the society depended considerably on 'Karma' (action) and actual vocation. It seems that both birth and 'Karma' have been the factors which decided the actual social status of a person for all practical purposes. In case, the Birth-Status and the Karma-Status fall apart, opposing each other, unique Contra-Ideal types of castes are produced. This phenomenon led to the bracketing of two caste names together, in order to represent the spurious status like Brāhma-Kṣatra[8] or Brāhmaṇa-Caṇḍāla etc.

7. Categories of the Brāhmaṇas

It has already been noted that from the Vedic age itself, Brāhmaṇas appear to have discharged diverse functions. In our period also they are divided into various sections on the basis of their functions and attributes.

Ṛṣis

The attributes of ṛṣis, who represented the glorious past and were closely connected with the ritualistic culture, changed considerably on account of the impact of the Muni-Śramana tradition and more positively

[1] *Mālavikāg.*, pp. 33 and 88.
[2] *Raghu.*, V.I; 1.20.21.
[3] Patañjali on Pāṇini, VI.2.36; Kielhorn, op. cit., III, p. 125.
[4] *Madhyamavyāyoga*, I, 9(a); cf. *Karṇabhāra*, I.16.
[5] *Cārudatta*, III.LL.16-17, V.17.
[6] *Mbh.*, XII.77.1-8, and 9-10.
[7] *Mbh.*, XII.77.4.
[8] Pathak, *Ancient Historians of India*, Asia Publishing House, 1966, pp. 164-66, 167ff.

by the pressure of the Upaniṣadic trend. We have already seen that the *Mahābhārata* describes two sets of seven ṛṣis who are said to have represented the ritualistic and spiritual trends.[1] The ṛṣis, excelling in moral quality and spiritual and ascetic attainments, are described as the custodian of the sacred tradition.[2] It is truly said that "a class of disinterested seekers of truth, supported by society, influencing it, and placed above the corrupting tendency of power, is the very life of social stability and growth."[3] We find in the *Mahābhārata* that the discourses on the vital social and religious points come as the dialogues between the ṛṣis and the Epic heroes. It was this class of seers and sages which is described to be responsible for the evolution and synthesis of various religious beliefs, precepts, and sects. These ṛṣis are classified, according to the tradition, into Brahmarṣis, Devarṣis and Viprarṣis. The Brahmarṣis had typical attributes of their own and were concerned mostly with the divine knowledge, deep learning, and ethical conduct. They enrich the store of knowledge in order to enhance the spiritual weal of the people. They were highly proficient in the doctrine of 'Brahman.'[4] The Devarṣis were those who had reached the gods' status by their knowledge, and establishing communion with the Divine Being.[5] The Viprarṣis were those Brāhmaṇas who were engaged in discharging proper duties as enjoined upon by the law-givers. In earlier times they used to recite Kathās and Gāthās and came to belong to the Sāmavedic branch.[6]

These categories, however, did not remain the basis of the sharp divisions of the Brāhmaṇa-ṛṣis by the time of our period. But each of these categories means some distinct attribute, although many observances and ideals must have been common to all of them. Besides, the names of the ṛṣis are not mentioned in any chronological sequence. They are presented as semi-divine beings having connections with celestial beings and always exerting for the welfare of the world.[7] The testimony of Āpastamba makes it clear that even anterior to our period there was no possibility of the ṛṣis being born.[8] But there had been Brāhmaṇas, bearing eponymous Gotra-names of their first ancestors, who are shown to have played vital roles in the cultural evolution as we find described in the epics, especially the *Mahābhārata*, and the Purāṇas.

[1] vide *supra*, pp. 65-7.

[2] *Mbh.*, XII.77.3.

[3] Radhakrishnan, S., *Eastern Religion and Western Thought*, Oxford, 1939, p. 166.

[4] *Mbh.*, XII.77.2; *Vāyu P.*, 61.80-88; see also Patil, *Cultural History from Vāyu Purāṇa*, Poona, 1946, pp. 21-23.

[5] For the difference between the Brahmarşis and the Devarşis see Wheeler, *Ancient and Hindu India*, pp. 22-23; see also Fausböll, *Indian Mythology*, London, 1902, pp. 146f.; Patil op. cit., pp. 21-23.

[6] *Ved. Ind.*, II, pp. 302.

[7] *Mbh.*, XII.327.7; Critical Edition, XII.314.6; cf. *Viṣ.Sm.* vide, *SBE*, VII, p. 153.

[8] *ĀDS*, *supra*, p. 5.

Brā'maṇas as Priests

The priestly class of the Brāhmaṇas has been the most important factor in the development and preservation of orthodox Vedism. In the formative stage of society there had been a tussle between Brāhmaṇas and Kṣatriyas for the right to perform priestly functions, but as times rolled on the former monopolised it.[1] The challenge of heterodoxy against dry ritualism was faced by popularizing the same, through the composition of the Śrauta literature and the practice of the rites prescribed in it. In our period the priestly class attempted to regain its position lost during Aśokan times.

The Royal Chaplain

Ever since the Vedic period the Brāhmaṇa priests were intimately associated with the kingship. The evolution of ancient Hindu polity had a deep stamp of the priestly class. A number of elaborate sacrifices and ceremonies speak of the close relation of the sacerdotal class with the institution of monarchy.[2] The royal priests, though entrusted mainly with sacerdotal functions for the king, generally exerted a great influence on secular matters[3] also. The Brāhmaṇical works are unanimous in exhorting the king to appoint a priest and to assign him an important position in the body-politic. Vasiṣṭha ordains the appointment of a priest for discharging rites of domestic nature.[4] He cites a Vedic passage (as his XIX.4) that 'a realm, where a Brāhmaṇa is appointed domestic priest, prospers.'[5] The priest acted both as astrologer and sacrificial priest. He had to perform the rites connected with 'expiation (Śānti), festivals, a prosperous march, long life, and auspiciousness for the king; as well as those that were intended to cause enmity, to subdue (enemies), to destroy (them) by incantations, and to cause their misfortunes.'[6] These passages are important as they show that the priest worked not only as the domestic sacrificial agent to the king but was also entrusted with the general welfare and prosperity of the kingdom. This clearly implies the public functions of the priest. Further, it is interesting to note that the term 'Brahmapurohita' is identical with that of the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa's*[7] term for the royal priest. There were other functionaries like ṛtvija, adhvaryu, hotṛ and potṛ associated with royal sacrifices but only the Brāhmaṇa-priest, which presupposes a distinct Brāhmaṇa element, was to be the royal chaplain. Gautama (XI.17) recognises the magical power of the priest which is to be employed through ritual acts.

The functions of the priest were quite wide and important. Baudhāyana

[1] *ŚBr.*, III.2.1.39; XIII.4.1.3; *KŚSūt.*, IV.14.11.
[2] vide *infra*, pp. 141ff.
[3] vide *Ved. Ind.*, I, pp. 113-14; II, p. 90.
[4] *VDS*, XIX.13.
[5] ibid, XIX.4; cf. *BDS*, XI.12-14; *Yāj.*, I.312; *Viṣ. Sm.*, 3.70; and also *Manu*, VII.78.
[6] *GDS*, XI.17.
[7] *ABr.*, VII.25; Keith, *HOS*, 25, p. 313; see also *ŚBr.*, XII.8.3.29; cf. *VDS*, XIX.4.

says: 'Let the king choose a domestic priest who shall be foremost in all transactions. Let him act according to his instructions.'[1] The provision of Kauṭilya is: 'He whose family and character are highly spoken of, who is well-educated in the Vedas and the six Aṅgas, is skilful in reading portents, providential or accidental, is well-versed in the science of government, and who is obedient and who can prevent calamities . . . by performing such expiatory rites as are prescribed in the *Atharvaveda*, the king shall employ him as high priest.'[2] It is further enjoined upon that as a student follows his teacher, a son his father, and a servant his master, the king shall follow him.[3] Kauṭilya ordains the priest to religiously boost up the morale of the army to fight.[4] He is to accompany the king when he examines the persons who are to be appointed as ministers.[5]

It is to be noted that the dicta of Kauṭilya reflect the position of the priest in the state as existed in the Vedic times. The priest used to support the king in war and, together with the king, he was the protective force for the realm. In a hymn connected with the victory of Sudās it is said: "May we in sacrifice conquer scornful Pūru."[6] The priest is described as the protector of the realm (rāṣṭragopa).[7] Winternitz opines that Kauṭilya accepts entirely the Brāhmaṇical religion and view of life as the foundation of the state, and he has in view a state organization in which the Brāhmaṇa plays the first role.[8] But U.N. Ghoshal contends that the purohita of Kauṭilya's Arthaśāstra has been ruled out from the list of proximate factors of Government.[9] It is likely that the disintegration of smaller states of earlier times, giving place to bigger kingdoms, led to the development of various administrative departments by the time of Kauṭilya, thus, differentiating the functions of the ministers, which, in turn, was but to curb the purohita's influence in secular matters. Likewise, Manu differentiates the functions of the domestic priest from the secular responsibilities of the Brāhmaṇa ministers.[10] In a developed science of polity, like that of Kauṭilya, such functional differentiation was bound to affect priestly influences.[11] Nonetheless, Kauṭilya emphasizes the status of the

[1] *BDS*, I.10.18.7-8.
[2] *KArth.*, I.9; tr. Shamasastry, 1919, p. 15.
[3] *KArth.*, I.9.16.
[4] ibid, X.3.
[5] ibid, I.10.1.
[6] *AV*, III.19.1; cf. *ṚV*, VII.18.13.
[7] *ABr.*, VIII.25.
[8] *Geschischte der Indischen Literatur*, III, pp. 528ff. vide *Sir Asutosh Memorial Volume*, Patna, p. 34.
[9] Ghoshal, *Hindu Political Theories*, pp. 88-89.
[10] vide *Manu*, VII.58; cf. VII.78.
[11] vide Dikshitar, *Hindu Administrative Institution*, Madras, 1929, pp. 123-29, per contra the View of Ghoshal, op. cit., pp. 88-89ff; cf. Kangle, *Kauṭilīya Arthaśāstra*, p. 145.

royal priest in no small measure and gives him quite important a position in the state.

Yājñavalkya, quite in accord with the Kauṭilyan spirit, lays down that following ministers and in due consultation with the Brāhmaṇa priest the king should administer the kingdom.[1] Gautama says that the king who discharges religious duties, with the assistance of a priest, prospers and never falls in distress.[2]

The Brāhmaṇa aspirants for this office were required to have sound learning, pure descent, good look, suitable age, virtue, moral attributes, austerities,[3] the capacity to protect the good and restrain evil.[4] The priest should perform the Bṛhaspatisava sacrifice to qualify for the office.[5] Yājñavalkya requires the priest to be an astrologer, well-versed in the theory of punishment and the Atharvan-Āṅgiras formula.[6] It implies that the priest had also to discharge some judicial functions. Hopkins observes that 'we meet the former (the Brāhmaṇas) not only as a religious but also as a judicial power, and may most conveniently regard them in their relation to the sovereign as a body, and then as a council, or whatever they are by virtue of their legislative power."[7] Sometimes the royal priests might have been noted scholars also, as was Patañjali, the great commentator on Pāṇini and the royal chaplain of Puṣyamitra Śuṅga. The priest was also a spiritual adviser to the king and served as a counsellor to him in general.[8]

The role of this class was an active force in the Vedic period. While the priestly class appears to be trying only to safeguard its civil rights in the early period, it claimed enormous privileges and superior status by the time of the Brāhmaṇa literature. To say that the Brāhmaṇas established their hold on society through the office of the Purohita[9] is true particularly about the pre-Upaniṣadic times. The priests, ever since the later Vedic period, were undisputably identical with the Brāhmaṇa class,[10] but the sacerdotal section was not the sole representative of the Brāhmaṇas. The priestly section of the Brāhmaṇas was distinct from those who followed the Nivṛtti dharma of the ascetic trend. A typical Vedic priest hankering after wealth, pleasure, and affluence is hardly compatible with a typical

[1] *Yāj.*, I.312; also Vijñāneśvara thereunder; cf. *BDS*, I.10.18.8; *VDS*, I.40-41; *Manu*, VII.78.

[2] *GDS*, XI.13-14.

[3] *GDS*, XI.12.

[4] *Mbh.*, XII.74.1ff; ibid, BE. XII.27.49.

[5] *KŚSūt.*, XXII.5.11.

[6] *Yāj.*, I.313.

[7] Hopkins, *Mutual relations of the four castes according to the Mānavadharmacāstram*, 1881, p. 91.

[8] Geldner, *Vedische Studien*, II, pp. 153-54; Macdonell, *HSL*, p. 159.

[9] Kaegi, *The Ṛgveda*, p. 17.

[10] Beni Prasad, *The State in Ancient India*, pp. 29, 53-54.

Brāhmaṇa of the Smārta ideals who, though poor, would ethically be a model for the society. This dichotomy of the Brāhmaṇa class does not mean that there was any internal tension in the class itself, rather the two sections were complementary to each others' position in the society.

Limitations of the Purohita's Power and Rank

One of the factors which limited the accentuation of the priestly power in the state was the uncertainty of the tenure of the office. This was a great problem to the priests ever since the Vedic period, and they attempted to make the priests' office hereditary.[1] That they were always successful is not the case. Rather, kings like Aśoka abolished the priest's office altogether. Very often the royal chaplain as counsellor and domestic priest to the king, despite all the superiority of his ritual-status, had to be subservient to him. In a full-fledged monarchy of Kauṭilyan type, he was on par with other ministers and drew a regular salary. This was greatly inconsistent with the efforts of the Brāhmaṇa-priests to remain independent of the state, claiming Soma as their king. It is no wonder that Manu groups the kings, their Purohitas, and the Kṣatriyas to be equal in rank but places them in low keys in relation to ascetics, Vipras and the ṛṣis.[2] In the *Mahābhārata* also, the royal priests are described to be of lower status than that of the ṛṣis, the officiating priests, and the learned Brāhmaṇa teachers.[3] At times the priests are held even lower in status than that of the king and they have to invent stories of their usefulness, superiority, and power.[4] The heterodox challenge also affected this institution to a great deal, exposing the worthlessness of ritualism, as also the priestly greed.[5] Further, purohita's counsel in secular matters was curbed. This privilege was now enjoyed by non-priestly Brāhmaṇa ministers, even according to the *Manusmṛti*.

In fact, in the process of standardization of social orders and groups the authors of our age, no doubt, asserted the priestly claims of privilege and position but they did not place him on par with an ideal Brāhmaṇa. Thus the position of the Purohita went down in comparison to what it was in the later Vedic period, while the Brāhmaṇas, living up to their high spiritual ideals, acquired as great a status as never before in the orthodox society.

In spite of this fact, while taking into account the status of the royal chaplain or the Purohita serving the nobility, we should not forget that the sacerdotal section of the Brāhmaṇas was by far the most important, rather the backbone of orthodox Vedism. The whole edifice of the social

[1]cf. *ṚV*, X.33; *ABr.*, VIII.27; Oldenberg, *Religion des Veda*, p. 376; cf. *KArth.*, I.9-10; *ABr.*, VIII.24.

[2]*Manu*, XII.46, 48-49.

[3]*Mbh.*, BE. XIII.93.130; cf. Muir, *OST*, I, p. 128; critical edition, XIII.95.65ff. and 69. *Bhāg. P.*, VI.7.36.

[4]Hopkins, *JAOS*, XIII, 1889, pp. 158-59, 162ff; cf. *ABr.*, III.17; cf. *Mbh.*, BE. I.41.31; VII.73.43; Crit., E.XII.77.6-10.

[5]vide *supra*, pp. 16-7.

order was based to a great extent on the ritual plane. The ritual status was the dominant factor in deciding the class-status. It was this class which preserved and developed the śrauta sacrifices and the Gṛhya rites. In any case, the role of the Purohitas was of considerable significance. As a matter of fact, the royal priests represented the Brāhmaṇas in general and the sacerdotal section in particular in the state. Though reduced in power, they must have exercised considerable influence on the king as a conservative force when backed by the orthodox ritual circles.

The Domestic Priests

The Śrauta priests were the great custodians of the orthodox culture. As all the twice-born classes were entitled or rather ordained to perform sacrifices, the domestic priest must have been engaged by those who could afford to undertake these ceremonies. The Śrauta priests, most of whom appear in the *Ṛgveda*,[1] were classified according to their precise functions in a sacrifice into sixteen types, grouped in four principal categories, viz. Hotṛ, Udgātṛ, Adhvaryu, and Brahmā. Each of these four group-heads included other three kinds of priests. Thus, the Hotṛ group consisted of Maitrāvaruṇa, Acchāvāka, and Grāvastut; the Udgātṛ group was formed of Prastotṛ, Pratihatṛ, and Subrahmaṇya; the Adhvaryu group comprised of Pratiprasthātṛ, Neṣṭṛ, and Unnetṛ; and, the Brahmā group was constituted of Brāhmaṇācchaṃsin, agnīdhra and Potṛ.[2] Some passages in the *Mahābhārata* inform us that in the Rājasūya sacrifice of Yudhiṣṭhira Vyāsa officiated as Brāhmaṇ while Dhaumya as Hotṛ.[3] Most Brāhmaṇical works take special interest in describing priestly associations with kings and nobility. This tendency is based on the very nature of the cult of sacrifices and ritualism. But the priests must have been in demand of the common people of twice-born classes also who, following the dicta of the law-givers, lived up to the traditional ways and took pride in performing the Gṛhya rites and Saṃskāras, distinguishing themselves from those who were not entitled to these sacraments and rituals. The active contacts of priests with other classes on a ritual plane does not mean only the preservation of the ritualistic culture, but also acculturation of the people in orthodox pattern of life. It would not be far from truth to say that it was the priestly section which helped the emergence of the Brāhmaṇas as a class in the formative stage of the social orders, gave a homogeneity to it, and strengthened this class making it capable of playing an important role in society. Their traditional status obliged them to perform the time-honoured cultural roles of priests who had to function 'as the guardians of sacred tradition and learning, . . . the promotors of education, of literary and linguistic activities and of technical knowledge and skill as the intellectual guides of the cul-

[1] *ṚV*, vide *supra*, pp. 5-6.
[2] *ŚŚSūt.*, XIII.14.1; *ĀŚSūt.*, IV.1.4-6.
[3] *Mbh.*, II.30.32-6.

ture they had created, fostered and stabilized.'[1] The Epics and the Purāṇas together with other Brāhmaṇical literature are replete with illustrations of such activities of the Brāhmaṇa class.

The Temple Priests

We have seen that the emergence of image worship in the Brāhmaṇical fold brought about the incorporation of a new theology and pantheon in the Vedic orthodoxy. The speedy development of the cult of Bhakti brought the worship of the sectarian deities to prominency. This phenomenon led to the formation of a special priestly section in the Brāhmaṇa class which was connected with temple worship. Although the worship of the images of deities was ordained by the Brāhmaṇic authors,[2] the provision of Manu regarding the temple priests is somewhat contradictory to his own statute of image worship.[3] The reverence shown to divine images in the *Manusmṛti* is diametrically opposed to his low estimation of the temple priests (Devalakas). He ordains that temple priests should be avoided at sacrifices offered to gods and manes. In the list of persons who do not have any right to Vedic ceremonies the temple priest is equated with physicians,[4] sellers of meat, who subsist by shop-keeping or are afflicted with skin-diseases, gamblers etc.[5] Those Brāhmaṇas who are thieves, outcastes, eunuchs and atheists have also been declared unworthy of partaking in the oblations to the gods and manes.[6] It is strange that Manu on the one hand ordains image worship and on the other equates the temple priests with contemptuous persons.

One plausible explanation of Manu's view regarding the temple-priests seems to lie in his puritan attitude. MM. P.V. Kane observes: 'the institution of worshippers of image had not an hoary antiquity behind it in the time of Manu, as that of priests officiating at the Śrauta or Gṛhya sacrifices had in his days; besides such men must have neglected the principal duty of a Brāhmaṇa (viz. Study of the Vedas) and so they were looked down upon.'[7] Further, Manu's resentment must have kept in view their subsistence by taking fees for the temple services. For in the *Manusmṛti* Devalakas are said to be those priests who take remuneration for performing services before the image in a temple. Three years' professional service of this kind makes them unworthy of invitation to a Śrāddha ceremony or

[1]James, *The Nature and Function of Priesthood*, London, 1955, p. 298.

[2]vide *supra*, pp. 64-5.

[3]*Manu*, II.176; VIII.87: III.117; IX.285; cf. *Viṣ Sm.*, 23.34; *Manu*, IV.39.

[4]Per contra the view of the authors of the *Dharmaśāstra* who discourage the physicians' job to a Brāhmaṇa, Caraka maintains that a Brāhmaṇa is entitled to study the Āyurveda in its eight branches for benevolent purposes. vide *Caraka Saṃhitā*, I.30.17.

[5]*Manu*, III.152; cf. III.153.

[6]*Manu*, III.150.

[7]Kane, *HDŚ*, II, Pt. I, pp. 711-12.

to officiate at a sacrifice for gods.[1] Nīlakaṇṭha, the commentator of the *Mahābhārata*, also takes Devalaka to be a Brāhmaṇa who is employed in the temple as priest and who performs worship for others to gain money[2] and on that account Devalakas are held as Cāṇḍāla-like Brāhmaṇas.[3] This would point to an undercurrent of tension between the extremely puritan Brāhmaṇas and those who had a somewhat liberal outlook within the Brāhmaṇa class itself.

Besides, the institution of temple worship was still to some degree in its formative state in the time of Manu and it was relatively free from the caste barrier. In such a case the temple-priest may not invariably be a Brāhmaṇa by caste. MM. P.V. Kane truly observes: 'even in modern times when caste is so rigid all priests in all temples and shrines are not Brāhmaṇas.'[4] As it is noted earlier, the maga Brāhmaṇas were a distinct recruitment of the outlandish priests. Even if this phenomenon is subsequent to Manu's time it shows the tendency of the non-Brāhmaṇa elements getting into the Brāhmaṇical fold as priests. In the Anuśāsana Parva we find the mention of a Śūdra who, on being denied admission to Saṃnyāsa observed vows and practised penance on his own initiative and erected sacrificial platforms. He also raised platforms for gods and worshipped them with proper rites.[5] In case the temple raised by such Śūdra was destined to flourish, it may not have been a wonder that in due course of time the Śūdra himself should have become the priest of that temple. The Kali age condition describes the Śūdras resorting to the religious acts of the Brāhmaṇas, and it is not for nothing that the Brāhmaṇa authors ordain kings to punish them who imitate the Brāhmaṇas' ways and marks.[6] The 'devalakas' were no doubt Brāhmaṇas by caste, but any possible non-Brāhmaṇical infiltration could have naturally alarmed an orthodox legist like Manu to disallow the temple-priest to the Vedic ceremonies.

But the temple-priests, though held in low status, played a positive role in consolidating Neo-Orthodoxy by helping the popularization of the institution of temple worship. They represented to a greater extent the popular cult worship than the orthodox Śrauta priests. Since the image worship was connected with the popular and easy means of devotion, the temple priests were in active contact particularly with the masses. They must have introduced the Brāhmaṇic rites and rituals amidst the people to the possible extent and won over the masses by reciting and preaching the Epic and Purāṇic legends and myths to them. This class of priests was a very significant agency in achieving the democratization of Vedicism and in bringing the other cults within the Brāhmaṇical fold and thereby pro-

[1] *Manu*, III.152; vide Commentaries thereunder.
[2] Nīlakaṇṭha on *Mbh.*, BE. XII.76.6; Critical edition, XII.77.8.
[3] *Mbh.*, BE. XII.76.6; vide *supra*, pp. 120ff.
[4] Kane, *HDŚ*, II, Pt. I, p. 109.
[5] *Mbh.*, XIII.10.17; XIII.10.13-17.
[6] vide *supra*, pp. 25-8; *infra*, pp. 152-53.

moting the process of cultural assimilation.[1] Regarding the cultural activities of the Brāhmaṇa priests it can be said that the nature of their influence operating through their varied cultural activity was directed to consolidating the social structure and religious beliefs as had been the universal priestly function marked in other cultures also.[2]

[1]see *supra*, pp. 68, 76; pp. 80, 83, 87.
[2]James, op. cit., p. 298.

Chapter 6

SYSTEMATIZATION AND STANDARDIZATION OF THE SOCIAL ORDERS (BRĀHMAṆAS AND THE VARṆA SCHEME)

1. Brāhmaṇas and Monarchy

The traditional cultural development fused the Brāhmaṇa and Kṣatriya classes into an inseparable bond of mutual cooperation.[1] Even in the early stages of the Vedic society the Brāhmaṇa priests and the Kṣatriyas, loosely distinct on occupational basis, emerged as the Brahma and Kṣatra powers,[2] cooperating actively in the cultural tussle[3] with non-Āryan elements, divided sharply and symbolically by the Varṇa[4] (colour) factor. The priestly class was associated with the Vedic state, whether republican[5] or monarchical.[6] But as the time rolled on, the priests became champions of monarchical polity. In ancient times ritual ceremonialism had vital functions in various walks of public life, which raised the priestly class to a distinct position in society. Magical powers deployed through the vehicle of ritual ceremonialism were believed to control divine elements and lend mysterious solemnity to any act of social or political import.[7] Likewise, in the Vedic society the priests, by means of their knowledge of mysterious 'mantra', were able to make the people strong and the nobility weak, and vice versa.[8] The purohita's power of lustre (Samana)[9] could multiply the people.[10] The priest through the agency of rituals in the coronation ceremony would raise the king above tribal control, making him supreme. Thus a king, when crowned, meant that 'a Kṣatriya was produced, a lord of all beings, the defender

[1]Pande, *Bauddha Dharma ke Vikāsa kā Itihāsa* (Hindi), 1963, pp. 19ff.
[2]*ṚV*, III.53.12; *ṚV*, I.157.2; *AV*, II.15.4; *TBr*., III.9.14.
[3]*ṚV*, I.51.8; I.117.21; III.29.9 etc.
[4]*ṚV*, II.12.4; I.179.6; *TBr*., I.2.6.
[5]Pandey, *IHC*, Proceedings, 1952, pp. 72ff.
[6]Jayaswal, *HP*, 1934, second edition, p. 189.
[7]cf. *Essays on the Ritual of Social Relations*, ed. Gluckman, Manchester University Press, 1962, pp. 17, 30-31, 32-33, 74-78, 83, 86.
[8]*MSaṃ*., III.3.10; *KSaṃ*., XXI.10.35-37.
[9]The Samana element has been common to the priesthood of other cultures also. vide James, op. cit., pp. 27ff.
[10]*PBr*., XV.5.42; *TSaṃ*., III.5.2; *KSaṃ*., XXXVI.17; *PBr*., XV.3.7; *JBr*.. III.244-47.

of Brāhmaṇas and of dharma.'[1] A king consecrated by the Purohita with the Mahābhiṣeka' of Indra establishes his sway round the earth on every side.[2] It can safely be said that the evolution of sacerdotalism marks the development of monarchical polity to a considerable extent. The dynamic function of the symbolic forms[3] as instituted in the consecration ceremonies and the various sacrifices like Aśvamedha, Rājasūya, Vājapeya etc. seems to be responsible for it.[4] Even the imperial status was categorised on the basis of rituals.[5]

Kings, through the help of the priestly class, were able to gain enormous power, freeing themselves of tribal control, especially in times of military expediency. The active cooperation of the Brahma and Kṣatra powers is highly emphasized in such times, for lack of which, even the gods were defeated by the Asuras.[6] It was said that a Brāhmaṇa supported by a rājanya is superior to a Brāhmaṇa lacking that support; likewise, a rājanya with a Brāhmaṇa's support is superior to a rājanya without the help of the same.[7] It is said that these two are the upholders of the sacred law among men.[8]

The combined forces of spiritual and temporal powers were responsible to a great deal for the break-up of tribal societies. The emergence of the bigger kingdoms at the cost of smaller units tended to destroy them externally, while the expansion of Varṇa society progressively replaced the tribal units. This Varṇa system, which first emerged in Manu's Madhyadeśa, was introduced in the North-eastern regions in the age of the Brāhmaṇa literature and became entrenched in the society by the Upaniṣadic times[9] under monarchical sway.[10] The consolidation of the monarchical power and the Varṇa system represented the advancement of orthodox culture. But a reaction[11] soon set in and tribal republics were established in the Northeast as well as Northwest, which were quite powerful and important between the sixth and third centuries BC.[12]

It is recorded by Megasthenes that 'sovereignty (kingship) was dissolved and democratic governments set up.'[13] Most of the tribal republics had

[1] *ABr.*, VIII.12.
[2] *ABr.*, VIII.21-23.
[3] see *The Philosophy of Ernst Cassirer*, ed. by Arthur Schipp, The Library of Living Philosophers, VI,1949, pp. 292-93ff.
[4] Altekar, *State and Government in Ancient India*, pp. 25, 57-58.
[5] *ABr.*, VIII.15.
[6] *ABr.*, I.14; *TBr.*, II.2.7.2; *TBr.*, III.1.52; *ŚŚSūt.*, XIV.23.1; cf. *TSaṃ.*, II.5.1.1; *KSaṃ.*, IV.4.
[7] *TSaṃ.*, V.1.10.3.
[8] *ŚBr.*, V.4.4.5; see also *SBE*, XLI, p. 106.
[9] vide *supra*, pp. 7-11.
[10] *ABr.*, Ch. XXXVII; *ŚBr.*, XI.3.1.2; *Bṛ. Up.*, IV. 1.1.
[11] Sharma, *APIIAI*, pp. 92-93.
[12] Many of them, however, survived up to Gupta period.
[13] Epitome of Megasthenes, Diodorus, 11.38; cf. Arrian, IX; McCrindle, *India as Described by Megasthenes and Arrian*, p. 208.

some degree of the caste formations but very often they reacted against not only monarchical polity but also against the caste system. Some of the republics of the Northeastern region tried to retain their autonomy and tribal organization by submitting to the powerful monarchy, for example, Śākyans had accepted the suzerainty of the Kośalan kingdom in the later half of the sixth century BC. The Buddha himself adopted the tribal system for the organisation of his Saṅgha. His evaluation of caste system in relation to asceticism tends to recognise the Varṇa order in a different way.[1]

Aśoka's ingenious innovations to strengthen the political unity of his kingdom by furnishing the universal bond of spiritual and ethical dharma, largely of Buddhist import, could not stand the test of time. The society. thoroughly disturbed after his death by the various antagonistic forces, foreign and indigenous, must have required stronger sanctions in order to retain its traditional character and regain stability. This implies as much the assertion of the monarchical form of government as the Varṇa system. Thus, monarchy and priesthood united in a common cause of orthodoxy—political and social.

The Brāhmaṇa authors of all categories have championed the cause of monarchical polity with an unflinching advocacy of the Kṣatriya rule. In spite of their desperate gallantry, the failure of the various tribal republics of the Northwest frontier region against Alexander must have been a bitter memory to the author of the *Arthaśāstra*, who envisaged their disintegration. Kauṭilya exhorts the king that a policy of 'acquisition (conquest) of a 'Saṅgha' is more desirable than an alliance of goodwill or military aid. Those which are united should be treated with the policy of subsidy and peace, for they are invincible. Those which are not united should be conquered by army and disunion.'[2] While laying down the various devices to create disunion in the Saṅgha making them weak preys of monarchical expansion, Kauṭilya says: 'Let those of higher rank (within the tribe) be discouraged from eating at a common table with, and marriage[3] with those of lower standing.' It may be suggested that the discouragement of laxity in the marriage and commensality, the most important factors of the caste system, must have implied the positive temptation of the Varna ranks for the tribal élites and chiefs.

Thus, the Brāhmaṇa Kṣatriya alliance, especially of the priestly section and nobility, was of great importance. According to the Purāṇas the gloomy days of orthodox culture ensued with the disappearance of Kṣatriya rule. The Purāṇic tradition describes all the kings after Mahāpadma Nanda to be of Śūdra origin.[4] The forces antagonistic to Vedic culture were fully supported by these so-called Sūdra and Mleccha

[1]vide *supra*, pp. 15f.
[2]*Arthaśāstra*, ed. Shamasastry, XI.1; tr. by T. Gaṇapati Śāstrī, pp. 376-79.
[3]*KArih.*, XI.1.
[4]vide Pargiter, *DKA*, pp. 25-26.

rulers in their crusade against orthodoxy.[1] *Manusmṛti*, which seems to have been composed against such a challenging background, advocates the supreme need of the power of a virtuous king to set the whole society in order. It is said that 'punishment alone governs all created beings, punishment watches over them while they sleep; the wise men declare punishment to be law (*dharma*).[2] The whole world is kept in order by punishment, for a guiltless man is hard to find.'[3] This advocacy of kingship, the symbol of punishment, demanded the virtues of traditional Kṣatriya-hood in the king, which implied the establishment of traditional justice and the protection of Varṇāśramadharma.[4] Brāhmaṇas relation with non-Kṣatriya rulers on the basis of Vedic rituals was highly resented. A Brāhmaṇa priest can neither officiate[5] lawfully for a Śūdra nor can he accept gifts from him.[6] This obviously represents the conservative injunctions of orthodox law-givers.[7]

Mutual cooperation between the Brāhmaṇas and Kṣatriyas is the ideal of our age. Manu declares: 'Kṣatriya prospers not without Brāhmaṇas, Brāhmaṇa prospers not without Kṣatriyas; Brāhmaṇa and Kṣatriya, being closely united, prosper in this world and in the next.'[8] The general tone of the *Mahābhārata* also is the same. It is stated that "the union of Brahma with the Kṣatra leads to the destruction of the enemy, like that of forest by the combined efforts of fire and wind,[9] while the opposition of the two leads to the destruction of the entire society.[10] When they act united the world is delighted with well-being and happiness."[11] "A king and a Brāhmaṇa deeply versed in the Vedas, these two," says Gautama, "uphold the moral order in the world. On them depends the existence of the four-fold human race, of internally conscious beings, of those which move on feet and on wings, and of those which creep," as well as 'the protection of offsprings, the prevention of the confusion (of the castes) and of the sacred law.'[12] It is emphasized by the authors that Brāhmaṇas' cooperation and services were vital for the successful management of State.[13] The *Mahābhārata*[14] asserts that the kingdoms with Brāhmaṇa at their heads can be retained for long.

[1]vide *supra*, pp. 25-28.
[2]*Manu*, VII.18.
[3]ibid, VII.22(a).
[4]vide *infra*, pp. 170-74; *Nārada*, XVIII.6, 7, 8.
[5]*Manu*, III.156; III.178; XI.24 and 42; *Yāj*., I.127, 216; *Viṣ. P.*, II.6.18.
[6]*Manu*, IV.84; *Yāj*., I.140.
[7]see per contra the ritual relations of the Brāhmaṇas with the Śūdras, pp. 92ff.
[8]*Manu*, IX.322; cf. *GDS*, XI.14; *VDS*, XIX.4,
[9]*Mbh*., III.183.22(a); cf. XII.74.4-5.
[10]Ibid, XII.74.2-14.
[11]ibid, III.27.16(a); III.27.10ff.
[12]*GDS*, VIII.1-3.
[13]*Mbh*., I.159.17-21; ibid, BE. I.170.75-80.
[14]ibid, I.170-80(b).

2. Divinity Accorded to Kingship

Since the king was to protect the Varṇāśramadharma and the people, against various challenging forces including those of heterodoxy also, he was accorded an uncommon status—superhuman or divine,[1] so that his words and actions may be religiously honoured by the people. The Kṣatra power was no less important than the Brahma power, the former was also to acquire divine status like the latter. Kauṭilya would make the royal spy declare that 'the king's office is that of Indra and Yama, visible inflictor of punishment and bestower of reward..... Hence kings are not to be despised.'[2] Likewise, Manu asserts that the king consists in his person the erternal elements of deities like—Agni, Vāyu, the Sun, Kubera, Varuṇa[3] etc. Even an infant king must not be despised as he is a great deity in human form.[4] It is said that king Pṛthu is declared by the Śruti to be the eighth incarnation of Viṣṇu.[5] The divinity of the king was not only a theoretical proposition. The Kuṣāṇa kings are styled 'devaputras.'[6] In the Allahabad Pillar Inscription, Samudragupta is described to have the potentiality of the lokapālas and he is said to be possessed of the attributes of Viṣṇu incarnated.[7] Thus the polity of the Vedic orthodox tradition ascribes divine status to the king, unlike the Buddhist Cakkavattī Dhammika Dhammarāja who, although he establishes the rule of 'dhamma' in all the four quarters, does not have the divine element in his person nor is he a deity in human form. Aśoka, who approximated the Buddhist conception of kingship was only a 'Beloved of Gods.' The divine king used to take a solemn pledge at his coronation to preserve the Vedic religion.[8] He was the protector of the Brāhmaṇas[9] and was entrusted to preserve and establish the Varṇāśramadharma in the society.[10] Yājñavalkya entrusts him with a greater responsibility, viz. to establish the 'Svadharmas' of the various societies, e.g., of the families (Kula), castes (*Jāti*), guilds (*Śreṇi*), corporations (*Gaṇa*) and of particular regions (*Janapada*).[11] Even the Brāhmaṇas had to take up arms if the king so requires.[12]

Neo-Orthodoxy and the Aspirations of the Aristocracy

Brāhmaṇas, as theologians, priests and law-givers, in their bid to share

[1]Ghoshal, *AHIPI*, 1959, pp. 24-25.

[2]*KArth.*, p. 23.

[3]*Manu*, VII.3-7; cf. *Nārada*, XVIII.52-55.

[4]ibid, VII.8.

[5]*Mbh.*, BE. XII.59.112; Comment. thereunder; Refer also to BE. XII.59.128-144; Critical Edition, XII.59.128ff.

[6]vide, Puri, *India under the Kushāṇas*, Bombay, 1965, pp. 16, 73.

[7]Fleet, *CII*, III, pp. 14-15.

[8]*Mbh.*, XII.59.112ff.

[9]*Manu*, VII.35, 83, 133-34.

[10]*GDS*, XI.9-10; *Manu*, VII.35. [11]*Yāj.*, I.361.

[12]*Mbh.*, IX.64.39; see also R. N. Sharma, *Brahmins Through the Ages*, Delhi, 1977, pp. 125-26.

political power, accommodated attitudes, values and aspirations of aristocracy and military class in the socio-religious structure of Neo-Orthodoxy. The much elaborated idea of the divine origin of sword which passed finally into secular hands[1] seeks to ethicise the coercive power of the state. Daṇḍa, born from Dharma itself, was created out of Brahma's lustre.[2] It is held that none of the great world religions 'appear to have been originally a militant cult, but, in reshaping and readjusting their forms to accord with inherent desires, needs, and attitudes of fighting men, a dominant warrior caste was able to impress its mould upon the religious pattern.'[3]

In the *Mahābhārata* (BE. XII. Ch. 98) war is very minutely elucidated as Yajña. The aristocratic values of valour[4] and chivalry are so much extolled that they touch a religious height. By laying down life in the battle-field one secures heaven.[5] A special consideration for the political power is obvious when the impurity of death is said to be inapplicable to those whom king so desires.[6] Nor becomes the king impure while engaged in his duties such as the protection of his subject, the trial of lawsuits[7] etc. Further, relatives of those dying in battle or killed by the king do not incur impurity.[8] A Cakravartī is made a part of Viṣṇu's self.[9] The deities like Rudragaṇa, Vasugaṇa, Aśvinikumāras etc., created by Viṣṇu, are established in Kṣatra dharma.[10] The Varṇa duties are at times explained to have originated from the political order (Rājdharma).[11] By such sort of provisions 'human power, government, and punishment thus become sacramental phenomena, that is, channels by which divine forces are made to impinge upon the lives of men.'[12] In fact, the formulation of such provisions gives religious ideologies a solid political base to stand upon and, in turn, the operational range of political power is tremendously widened. No socio-religious sanction could prevent a Śūdra to practise penance and Rāma had to kill one (Śambūka)[13] in order to preserve Brāhmaṇa's life and identity.

3. Claims of Brāhmaṇa's Independence

While attempting to safeguard their civil-rights[14] and asserting their status alongwith their claims of immunity, the Brāhmaṇas tried to remain

[1] *Mbh.*, XII. ch. 160 and 58.
[2] *Manu*, VII.14.
[3] Wach, *Sociology of Religion*, p. 255.
[4] *Gītā*, II.31, 33, 35. [5] ibid, II.31, 37.
[6] *Viṣ. Sm.*, XXII.53.
[7] ibid, XXII.48.
[8] ibid, XXII.47.
[9] *Mbh.*, BE. XII.59. 128 and 129ff.
[10] *Mbh.*, XII.64.13ff.
[11] *Mbh.*, XII chs. 63-64.
[12] Peter L. Berger, *The Social Reality of Religion*, p. 34.
[13] Bose, N. K., *The Structure of Hindu Society*, p. 88f.
[14] Ghoshal, *Hindu Public Life*, I, vide *supra*, pp 6-7.

independent of tribal bindings. They were instrumental to help accumulation of power by the kings, but they attempted to make themselves free from royal control as they had endeavoured to ensure their independence in earlier times.[1]

Such assertion of the independent status of the Brāhmaṇas is made in the *Manusmṛti* also. 'Whatever wealth exists on the earth—all that belongs to the Brāhmaṇa; the Brāhmaṇa deserves everything on account of his superiority due to his descent (from the mouth of the Creator).'[2] 'The Brahmaṇa eats but his own food, wears but his own apparel, bestows but his own in alms; other mortals subsist through the benevolence of the Brāhmaṇa.'[3] Gautama also laid down the traditional claim saying that the king is master of all, with the exception of the Brāhmaṇa.[4] This might seem an extravagant claim quite in the spirit of the militant assertion of their supreme status. But it reminds us of their early attempts to remain independent of the royal power. This claim was sought to be materialised by elevating the Brāhmaṇa's spiritual power. On the other hand, despite the priestly attempts at the consolidation of the Purohita's office by making it hereditary,[5] priests were not free of the king's autocratic treatment, who could appoint more than one Purohita and dismiss them at will.[6] As a matter of fact, the greatest priestly weapon against the Kṣatra power was speech and the power derived from the sacred Atharvan and Āṅgiras texts.[7] When a Brāhmaṇa-priest could serve more than one king at the same time,[8] the kings would naturally have right to appoint more than one priest.

But by our age the Brāhmaṇic claims to independence from the royal power, on the basis of their supreme ritual-status, were challenged by the pointed attacks of heterodoxy against the cult of sacrifice, ritual, and priestly pretensions. The end of the office of the royal chaplain in the time of Aśoka must have amounted to be one of the concluding blows to the time-honoured priestly position.

The growing loss of the effectiveness of sacerdotalism relatively brought about an increased importance of the Upaniṣadic cultural values. The Brāhmaṇas who excelled in spiritual-status must have enjoyed a greater degree of independence than those who practised the dependent profession of priests.[9] Manu lays down that, though entitled to accept gifts, a

[1] *VSaṃ.*, X.17.18; *ŚBr.*, V.4.2.3, V.4.4.15; *SBE*, XXVI, p. 270.
[2] *Manu*, I.100.
[3] ibid, I.101.
[4] *GDS*, XI. 1; cf.XI.7-8.
[5] vide *ṚV*, X.3.3; *ABr.*, VIII.27; Oldenberg, *Religion des Veda*, p. 375.
[6] *Ved. Ind.*, II, p. 5.
[7] *Manu*, XI.33; cf. *AV*, III.19.1; *VSaṃ.*, IX.23; *ABr.*, III.17.
[8] *ŚBr.*, II.4.4.5; *ŚŚSūt.*, XVI.29.
[9] vide *supra*, pp. 119-20.

Brāhmaṇa should not time and again resort to it as his spiritual power acquired by the study of the Vedas is lost by accepting it.[1]

4. Brāhmaṇas in Relation to Vaiśyas

The Vaiśyas' status is held lower to that of the Brāhmaṇas and the Kṣatriyas.[2] He is not a guest, like the Kṣatriya, in the Brāhmaṇa's house. He is to be fed by the Brāhmaṇa's servants, showing compassionate disposition.[3] A Kṣatriya is to be fined 100 (Kārṣāpaṇas) for the offence of defamation of a Brāhmaṇa but a Vaiśya is liable to the fine of 150 for the same offence. While a Brāhmaṇa has to pay fifty (Kārṣāpaṇas) for the defamation of a Kṣatriya, this amount is reduced to twentyfive for the defamation of a Vaiśya.[4] A Brāhmaṇa, in order to complete his sacrifices, can forcefully take articles from a wealthy Vaiśya's house who neither performs the minor sacrifices, i.e., 'pañcayajña' nor drinks the Soma-juice.[5]

Being entrusted with the accumulation of wealth,[6] the Vaiśya class was the main source of income to the state. In the *Tāṇḍya Mahābrāhmaṇa* it is said: 'Hence the Vaiśya, though being eaten (i.e., subsisted upon) by others is not exhausted, since he was created from the 'prajanana'; therefore he has numerous cattle. . . . his season is the rains (i e., he is entrusted with the agricultural production), therefore, he is to be eaten (subsisted upon) by the Brāhmaṇa and the Rājanya."[7] In the *Mahābhārata* also he is described as the main taxpayer in comparison to other classes.[8] Manu says that he should exert himself to increase his property in a righteous way and should zealously give food to all created beings.[9]

In regard to the Vaiśyas, it is noteworthy that they are at times equated with the Śūdras. Manu enjoins on the king to make the Vaiśyas and the Śūdras to follow their respective duties and occupations and warns him against their deviations which would throw the entire world into confusion.[10] A provision is made that a Vaiśya and Śūdra must be punished exactly in the same manner according to the prescriptions of their respective castes, but the tongue of the latter shall not be cut out, as he pays the middle-most amercement.[11] The monthly purification of the Śūdra is

[1] *Manu*, IV.186.
[2] *ĀDS*, I.1.1.5.
[3] *Manu*, III.110-112.
[4] *GDS*, XXI.6-10.
[5] *Manu*, XI.12.
[6] *Mbh.*, V.130.28(b).
[7] *TMBr.*, VI.10.
[8] *Mbh.*, II.43.25(b); cf. IV.65.15.
Manu, VII.129-30, 137-38; X.118.
[9] *Manu*, IX. 333.
[10] ibid, VIII.418. vide *Manusmṛti*, ed. Vasudeva Sharma, Nirṇayasāgara Press, 1915, p. 339.
[11] ibid, VIII.277.

the same as that of the Vaiśya.[1] Hopkins, in his critical monograph on the *Mānavadharmaśāstra*, comments that 'the Vaiśya and the Śūdra are grouped together in one law by which the two lower castes are presented as one body opposed to the two upper ones.'[2] Since the Varṇa system in the *Manusmṛti*, as in other Dharmaśāstras, makes the four classes considerably interdependent, this antagonistic grouping of the classes construed by Hopkins could hardly be accepted as entirely true. Nevertheless, his opinion points out to an important aspect of the mutual relations of the classes. The question as to what factors led the Brāhmaṇa authors to entertain a relatively low estimation of the Vaiśyas, who formed a propertied class, and, being one of the twice-born classes, had full-fledged right to the Vedic rituals and study, invites our attention for somewhat closer and elaborate considerations.

In this regard our attention is drawn, first of all, to the fact that the Vaiśyas were far less homogeneous as a class than the Brāhmaṇas or even the Kṣatriyas. The common people (Viś) of earlier times came to form the Vaiśya class. *The Taittirīya Saṃhitā* mentions that they exceed others[3] (i.e., Brāhmaṇas and the Kṣatriyas) in number, which is a fact corroborated by the notices of Megasthenes, whose enumeration puts this class (georgoi) second in the serial order and is said to have formed the larget portion of the population.[4] The fact of their being a large section of the population was sure to bring about gradations in this class on the basis of 'Economic Status.' The poor, or less propertied, Vaiśya would naturally be of lower 'Economic Status' than the wealthier Gahapati Mahāsālas, who were definitely the higher sections of the Vaiśya class, resembling the Khattiya Mahāsālas and the Brāhmaṇa Mahāsālas.[5] This difference in the social status of the Vaiśyas on account of their different 'Economic Status' must have been sharp enough to catch the eyes of the law-givers.

An important reason of the low estimation of the Vaiśyas might have been a bit of reaction of the authors against the materialistic pursuits in life because they tended to give importance to the 'ritual-status,' laying particularly greater emphasis on spiritual elevation ever since the Upaniṣadic times. But regarding Manu's caution to king against the Vaiśyas and the Śūdras it is rightly said by R.S. Sharma: "When the strong rule of the Mauryas broke down it was found increasingly difficult to keep the Vaiśyas and the Śūdras within the bounds of their assigned duties."[6] And the provisions of the law-givers equating the Vaiśyas with the Śūdras seem to be of pragmatic import in so far as the poorer Vaiśyas were no better than Śūdras. Though the law-givers' attempt to standardize the class orders on the traditional basis was to maintain the distinct status of the Vaiśyas as a

[1] *Manu*, V.140.
[2] *The Mutual Relations. . . .*, pp. 81-82.
[3] *TSaṃ.*, VII.1.1.5; cf. *TMBr.*, VI.1.10.
[4] Arrian, *Indica*, IX; cf. Strabo, 15; see also Kosambi, *ISIH*, pp. 185-6.
[5] *Saṃ. Nik.*, I, p. 71; cf. *Mahāparinibbāna Sutta*, V. 24; *Tittira Jātaka* (no. 217).
[6] Sharma, *Śūdras in Ancient India*, p. 177.

twice-born class in comparison to the Śūdras, yet their economically low status must have been too prominent to be ignored, especially when most of the Śūdras were coming up to approximate their own economic position with that of the commercial class by adopting occupations traditionally meant for the latter. The *Milinda Pañho* says that cultivation, trade and tending cattle are the functions of the ordinary folk like the Vaiśyas and the Śūdras.[1] Agriculture, one of the main occupations of the Vaiśyas, was by its very nature contradictory to the study of the Vedas[2] and the resultant divorce from the study of the Vedas must have made a good number of them devoid of their standard ritual 'dharma,' particularly under the impact of Buddhism. The Kali situation described by orthodox authors amply testifies to this. Those Vaiśyas who were ritually fallen and economically equal to the Śūdras must have created a situation in which "distinctions between the functions of the Vaiśyas and the Śūdras were being gradually obliterated."[3] Towards the beginning of the period of our study the Vaiśyas and the Śūdras were becoming to a considerable extent, antagonistic to and disruptive of orthodox social system, hence both of them, although equated as seditious elements, were required to be put to their '*respective dharmas*' by the king.[4]

Besides, somewhat different category of factors, bearing upon the position of this class, appears to have gone in the process of the social standardization and systematization, which seems to be responsible for breeding a cryptic distrust towards this class, as is mirrored forth in some strong sanctions against them.

With the background of priestly support to the nobility in bringing the Vaiśyas to its service,[5] particularly as a source of state income, we find that a tremendous change began to occur in society from the sixth Century BC onwards, on account of the development of money economy, new means of production, arts and crafts which led to the formation of various trade guilds. They became special features of urban areas and bigger cities.[6] These phenomena are completely visible by the third Century BC, as is attested by Kauṭilya's reference to the department of commerce and his enumeration of various articles of taxation.[7] The peaceful and well-established Mauryan rule gave added impetus to trade and commerce.[8] This development brought about a relative change in the commercial class.

[1]*SBE*, XXXV, Pt. I, p. 247.
[2]*BDS*, I.5.10.31.
[3]Sharma, op. cit., p. 177.
[4]*Manu*, VIII.418.
[5]*TSaṃ*., II.5.10.1; *MSaṃ*., I.101.13; *ŚBr*., IV.3.3.10, IV.4.2.23-25, VI.4.4.13; *TBr*., I.6.5; *ABr*., III.35, V.34, VII.29; *Mbh*., BE. XII.208.23-35.
[6]*Dig. Nik*.. *Sāmaññaphala Sutta*; vide also Rhys Davids, *Buddhist India*, London, 1911, pp. 87ff; 96ff; 100 ff; *CHI*, I, pp. 183-84; Adhya, *Early Indian Economics*, pp. 82f.
[7]*KArth*., II.4.
[8]Thapar, *ADM*, pp. 72ff.

A section of it rose to a high social and political status by accumulation of fabulous wealth. This wealthy section of the Vaiśyas was known[1] as Gahapati Mahāsāla or Ibha (Sanskrit Ibhya) or Seṭṭhi (Śreṣṭhin) according to its economic status.

This wealthy section of the Vaiśyas from whom the state used to get huge sums in cash and kind as taxes, must have elevated itself to a considerable status and, by exerting economic pressure, it seems to have become even a political factor. Like the Khattiyas and the Brāhmaṇas, the Vaiśyas had their own pariśads known as 'Gahapatiparisad.'[2] As a counsel to the king in matters of trade and commerce and in order to safeguard the interest of the wealthy class, a Seṭṭhi used to be present in the royal court,[3] along with Amātyas, Brāhmaṇas and princes.[4] On important ceremonial occasions, like the coronation, too, he was present with other dignitaries.[5] This commercial section, mainly of the urban areas, does not get a proper mention in the Dharmaśāstras whose authors were concerned more with the four Varṇas in general and the village economy in particular. The artisans are mentioned, but disparagingly.[6]

In fact, imperial adventure, best expressed in war, was hardly in the interest of the Vaiśyas. The Kauṭilyan theory that 'from the treasury the army has its origin'[7] sounds like a pragmatic sanction, prone to exhaust the bigger cultivators and traders. So wealthy traders, it appears, supported Buddhism[8] and Jainism[9] which, championing peace and non-violence were taken to grant favourable conditions to the growth of wealth through trade and commerce. Early Buddhism, even though emphasizing renunciation and monkhood, ideologically suited the pursuit of wealth. Later on Buddhism, however, came to compromise with the laity,[10] and won over a large section of the Vaiśyas as its supporters, a phenomenon which well continued in our period.

But the disturbed state of affairs after the break up of the Mauryan empire

[1] *Milinda.*, *SBE*, XXXVI, p. 146; vide also *Sam. Nik.*, I, p. 71; Fick, *SONEIBT*, pp. 253-7; see Asoka's RE. V.

[2] *Mahāvagga*, VI.28.4.

[3] *Jāt.*, I, pp. 269, 349; III, p. 415, IV, p. 63; cf. *Mahāvagga*, VIII.1.16.

[4] *Pañcaguru Jāt.*, I, p. 470.

[5] *Jāt.*, III, p. 408; cf. *Mahāvagga*, I.22.3.

[6] *Manu*, X.99-100; see also Adhya, op. cit., pp. 92-93.

[7] *KArth.*, tr. Shamasastry, 7th, ed., p. 89.

[8] The second batch of 56 converts from Varanasi after the 5 earlier Brāmaṇa disciples of the Buddha was from the commercial class. In the votive inscriptions of the centuries around the Christian era they are depicted as merchants, farmers, caravan-leaders or treasurers. Vide *Lüders List*, nos. 193, 201, 202, 449-50 Sanchi; no. 725 Bharhut; no. 1120 Nanaghata; nos. 1170, 1157 Junnar; nos. 1206, 1209, 1211 etc. Amaravati; nos. 24, 41 Mathura; no. 148, 206, 248, 255, 283, 339 Sanchi; no. 1087 Karle; see also Adhya, *Early Indian Economics*, p. 4.

[9] *Uvāsagadasāo*, I.4-5; II.92; III.127; IV.145; V.155; VI.163; VIII.232; IX.268: X.293: VII.112.

[10] vide *supra*, pp. 21-22.

with the resultant feuds and wars could hardly reconcile an active king with Buddhist ideals or make him tolerant towards the pressures of economic magnates. In order to take hold of the situation 'they (the princes) revieved the ties with the Brahmanical intellectual strata and the caste organization over and against the ancient Buddhistic monkdom and the guild. . . .'[1] This observation represents approximately the state of affairs prevailing during a couple of centuries before and after the Christian era also, or even until the consolidation of the Gupta empire.

Orthodoxy considered the influence of Buddhism on the state and the people as an antagonistic force. The pressure of the wealthy guilds was also an impediment to the king. Here the interests, though of varying shades and degrees, of the priestly section and the nobility seem again to be common. The author of the *Manusmṛti*, a representative of orthodoxy, could not have sanctioned[2] without the support of kingship that, 'if a sacrifice (offered) by (any twice-born) sacrificer, (and) especially by a Brāhmaṇa, must remain incomplete through (the want of) one requisite while a righteous king rules, that article (required) for the completion of sacrifice, may be taken (forcibly) from the house of any Vaiśya, who possesses a large number of cattle, (but) neither performs the (minor) sacrifices nor drinks the Soma-juice.' It is significant to note that the Vaiśyas, though rich in cattle, not performing the pākayajña and somayajña by implication would mean Vaiśyas fallen from the ritual duty of the orthodox faith. His articles could be appropriated for the completion of the Yajña. Yajña here might have a wider meaning in case it was the Kṣatriya's sacrifice of some political import. The commentators Medhātithi, Govinda, Kullūka, and Nārada have explained the expression "while a righteous king rules" to signify that 'such a king will not punish a man who acts in accordance with the Śāstras.'[3] It would mean that this sanction was to be applied only to such a Vaiśya who did not act in accordance with the Śāstras. This provision becomes all the more positive in case the Vaiśya is under the influence of the heterodoxy, especially Buddhism. In contradiction to this provision, Manu exhorts the king to protect[4] an orthodox Vaiśya by weapon against robbers and thieves.

Thus the restructuring of the rules bearing upon the duty (*dharma*) and status of the Vaiśyas seems to have been attempted by the authors of our age, partly in reaction to the Buddhist leanings of a section of the Vaiśyas and partly with reference to their actual conditions in the society.

5. Antipathy Towards Śudras

It is already noticed that heterodox movements gave unprecedented shocks to the orthodox social and religious institutions. The situation was

[1]Max Weber, *The Religions of India*, 1960, p. 292.
[2]*Manu*, XI.11-12; see also *Mbh.*, XII.159.6-9.
[3]*SBE*, XXV, p. 432 fn; *Yāj.*, II.166; *Nārada*, XVIII.37.
[4]*Manu*, X.119; *SBE*, XXV, p. 427.

made all the more critical and precarious for orthodoxy by the revolting spirit of the Śūdras against traditional social institutions, particularly in the post-Mauryan period.[1] The reaction of orthodoxy expressed itself through an antipathy towards the Śūdras. The orthodox circle visualised them as an anti-social element. They were regarded as envious, untrustful, greedy, ready to do all sorts of work in order to get a livelihood, full of the qualities of darkness and prone to deviate from the path of virtue.[2] These anti-social activities were taken to be directed mainly towards the Brāhmaṇas.[3] The element of 'Tama' was held to be dominant in them.[4] The *Bhagavadgītā* declares that the Śūdras, along with the Vaiśyas and women, owe their origin to sin.[5] The Śūdras are compared to the crematorium.[6] Foreign infiltration and a disturbed political state of affairs were specially encouraging to them in their disruptive activities.[7] The Śūdras sometimes even pretended to be of higher castes, having marks of twice-borns.[8] It is rightly held that 'the statements of Manu betray his complete distrust of the Śūdras and his consequent anxiety to guard against their hostile activities, which were either apprehended or actually took place in times of foreign invasion.'[9] Manu enjoins upon the kings to be cautious of their unwarranted deviations and put them to their respective duties, otherwise the whole world will be thrown to utter confusion.[10] He ordains the king to punish those who imitate Brāhmaṇs.[11] Yājñavalkya prescribes milder punishment.[12] Manu permits[13] only the Śūdras to settle outside Āryandom and prohibits the Brāhmaṇas to settle in a Śūdras kingdom.[14] A Brāhmaṇa may confidently, i.e., without the fear of incurring sin, seize the goods of his Śūdra slave.[15] A Śūdra, whether bought or unbought, may be compelled to do servile work by a Brāhmaṇa for he was created by the Self-Existent (Svayambhū) to be his slave.[16] Servitude being his innate quality, a Śūdra, though emancipated by his master, is not free from servitude.[17] Except for laxity allowed under Āpaddharma, the provisions of the orthodox law-givers, particularly of Manu, seek to place this

[1]Refer to 'The Impact of the Kali Age . . .' vide *supra*, pp. 25-31.
[2]*Mbh.*, XII.181.13.
[3]vide *supra*, pp. 29-31.
[4]tamaḥ Śūdre *Mbh.*, Critical Edition, XIV.39.11.
[5]*Gītā*, IX.32.
[6]*VDS*, XVIII.13.
[7]vide *supra*, pp. 28-31.
[8]*Manu*, IX.224.
[9]Sharma, *Śūdras in Ancient India*, p. 215.
[10]*Manu*, VIII.418.
[11]ibid, X.224, 260; IX.223; vide also Jayaswal, *Manu and Yājñavalkya*, pp. 91-92.
[12]*Yāj.*, I.307; vide *Yājñavalkyasmṛti*, ed. Gaṇapati Śāstrī, Trivandrum, 1922, p. 298.
[13]*Manu*, II.24.
[14]ibid, IV.61; *ĀDS*, I.11.32.18.
[15]ibid, VIII.417.
[16]ibid, VIII.413.
[17]ibid, VIII.414.

class in complete servitude to other classes, especially the Brāhmaṇa, through the agency of the royal power and the traditional sanctions.

Besides, the fluid nature of the Śūdra class must have posed no less a troublesome problem in their attempt to bring this class to conform with the orthodox provisions. This utterly heterogeneous class was rather a multitude of artisans, occupational groups, labourer-cultivators, and a number of lowly held caste and tribes.[1] These parallel societies forming the Śūdra class hardly had any social intercourse between one another in regard to marriage and commensality. A demarcation was made between higher category of Śūdra such as 'Anirvasita'[2] and 'Bhojyānna'[3]—who were granted rights to orthodox ritual and Āryan dish and the food prepared by whom could be taken by the Brāhmaṇas—and 'Nirvasita' and 'Abhojyānna' who were denied these rights. The authors have laid down harsh provisions against them. It is noteworthy that in a heterogeneous population the methods of control become harsh and violent.[4] Despite this fact, this class, loose enough to accommodate any fresh functional units and peoples—foreign and indigenous, was advantageous for the lawgivers in their task of social systematization.

6. Change in the Position of Śudras

Despite all Brāhmaṇic antipathies, the position of the Śūdras seems to have undergone significant changes on account of the internal transformation and the external pressure. The development of arts and crafts and the steady approximation of artisans to the position of this class must have raised its status even by the time of Kautilya.[5] Manu assigns the Śūdras only one duty, i.e., to 'meekly,' serve.[6] But he himself prescribes[7] in the āpaddharma provisions that they should adopt those mechanical ārts and crafts 'by following which the twice-borns are best served.' Manus' emphasis on service might have been directed to make a Śūdra serve the general interest of the twice-born classes, which seems to point out to the interdependent nature of the Varṇā system. As regards the Śūdra's occupations, they were vitally important to help increase the social wealth and bring general welfare. Manu's expression 'Krītadāsa,' seems to reflect only the tradition signifying that the Śūdras or non-Āryan elements were made 'dāsas' of the twice-borns, especially Brāhmaṇas.[8] Despite the strong injunction of Manu against taking up the profession of the higher classes in the time of distress, "the Śūdra alone, by implication,

[1]vide Kane, *HDŚ*, II, Pt. I, pp. 94ff.
[2]Patañjali on Pāṇini, II.4.10.
[3]*Yāj.*, I.166; *Manu*, IV. 211; cf. *ĀDS*, II.2.3.4; *GDS*, XII.5-6.
[4]Gillin and Gillin, *An Introduction to Sociology*, p. 543.
[5]*KArth*, I.3.
[6]*Manu*, I.91; VIII.414.
[7]ibid, X.100.
[8]ibid, VIII.413.

seems to have been allowed to ascend in rank in time of distress, and although still devoted to the interest of the twice-born, he nevertheless assumes the position of the twice-born."[1] The *Mahābhārata* mentions them as artisans (*Śilpopajīvinam*) in context of the Āpaddharma.[2] It is to be noted that Manu allows a Brāhmaṇa to learn useful arts and crafts from a low caste Śūdra.[3] While it shows Śūdras' monopoly of technical learning, the Śūdra as an instructor of the Brāhmaṇas must have been elevated in position whenever it would have been the case in practice. It seems that Manu, though he gave a lower status to the Śūdras in general, never ignored those who were practising occupations useful to the society.[4] *Divyāvadāna* mentions that a Brāhmaṇa was taught by a Cāṇḍāla.[5] Nārada allows the Śūdras to even adopt functions of Kṣatriyas in times of distress.[6] These Āpaddharma provisions seem to be based on hard facts of our age, which was certainly an age of crisis and emergency.

Again, in our period, food from the superior sections of the Śūdras was permitted to be taken. Āpastamba[7] allowed a Śūdra to be a cook in a Brāhmaṇa's house under the supervision of men of the first three castes. Manu says that a Brāhmaṇa can take the food of the Śūdras who are his labourers in tillage, friends of his family, his cowherds, his slaves, and his barbers.[8] At another place he[9] prohibits food of a Śūdra for the Brāhmaṇa but he, however, overrides[10] this provision in giving rather liberal provision that a learned Brāhmaṇa should not take cooked food from a Śūdra who does not perform Śrāddha rites. Even in the time of Yajñavalkya[11] and the *Viśṇu Smṛti*,[12] we find quite a liberal attitude in matters of commensality. But as time rolled on taking food from the Śūdra was discouraged and the relevant rules[13] became stricter which led to the creation of caste isolation. We find that the Śūdras' right to wealth is controverted by the law-givers as it is against the interest of the society and the Brāhmaṇas, which suggests that some Śūdras were quite wealthy and had the right to property, especially those who were not employed by the upper class. Moreover, the law of inheritance and bequeathing the property and the rate of interest laid down for the Śūdras well testify, not

[1]Hopkins, *The Mutual Relations*. . ., p. 84.
[2]*Mbh*., XII.283.3.
[3]*Manu*, II.238-40.
[4]ibid, VII.75.
[5]*Divyā*., ed. Vaidya, Darbhanga, 1959, pp. 333f.
[6]*Nārada*, IV.48; see also Asahāya thereunder.
[7]*ĀDS*, II.2.3.4.
[8]*Manu*, IV.253; cf. *GDS*, XII.5-6.
[9]ibid, IV.211.
[10]ibid, IV.223.
[11]*Yāj*., I.166.
[12]*Viṣ. Sm*., 57.16.
[13]*Saṇkhasmṛti*, 13.4; *Parāśara*, XI.13; Aparārka on *Yāj*., I.166.

only that some sections of them were wealthier, but recognises their right to property.[1] He can acquire wealth with the permission of the king for religious observances.[2]

We find that the profession of arms was generally discouraged to the Śūdras. Kauṭilya does not find any merit in the Śudras as soldiers and preferred them only because of their superiority in number.[3] The *Mahābhārata* allows them to take up arms in emergency.[4] But Manu does not allow him the same.

The legal position of the Śūdras presents a great contrast to that of the Brāhmaṇas. A Śūdra could not interpret the law and be a judge.[5] His position even as a witness was not very sound in comparison to the other three Varṇas.[6] But his social status must have been better and we find even a Brāhmaṇa is liable to be punished for his offence of abusing a Śūdra.[7] He was no more to be killed at will.[8] The killing of member of any Varṇa (including Śūdras) was a sinful deed, but graded punishments on the basis of caste put a lighter *prāyaścitta* in the case of the killing a Śūdra than the killing persons of the upper Varṇas.[9] The king should protect even a Śūdra who seeks his refuge, for which he gets merit in the next birth.[10]

Ritual-Status of the Śūdras

Ever since the inception of the Varṇa system, the Śūdra, as the fourth class, had relatively deficient ritual-status, although he was never denied the Āryan rites entirely. It seems that there must have been such Śūdras whose virtuous lives made an impact on the liberal sections of the Brāhmaṇas, who frankly equate the virtuous Śūdras with the Brahmaṇa.[11]

The socio-religious standardization by the Brāhmaṇa law-givers of our period seems to take cognizance of the changed position of the Śūdras regarding their ritual-status and religious rights. They had now the right to perform the five great sacrifices.[12] The *Mahābhārata* allows them to perform the Pākayajña with the authority to offer a nominal sacrificial fee, i.e., Pūrṇapātra dakṣiṇā.[13] The commentator, Nīlakaṇṭha, who belonged to the 17th century AD, entitles them to perform minor sacrifices with

[1] *Manu*, VIII.418; IX.179; VIII.142; *Mbh.*, BE. XIII.47.56; *Yāj.*, I.127; I. 133; II.38.

[2] *Mbh.*, XII.60.29-30.

[3] *KArth.*, IX.11.

[4] vide *infra*, pp. 229ff.

[5] *Mauu*, VIII.20-21.

[6] ibid, VIII.88; *Viṣ Sm.*, 8.20-23.

[7] *Manu*, VIII.268.

[8] *ABr.*, VII.29; see also Sharma, *Śudras in Ancient India*, p. 60.

[9] *Manu*, XI.66, 126-30; *Yāj.*, III.266-267; cf. *GDS*, XXII.14-16; *ĀDS*, 1.9.25.14; *Mat. P.*, 227.35.

[10] *Mbh.*, I.150.24.

[11] *Mbh.*, III.216.14-15, Critical Edition, III.206.11-12.

[12] *Manu*, X.127; see also Kullūka (12th or 13th century AD) on the same.

[13] *Mbh.*, XII.60.37.

Purāṇic hymns and allows them even the Vedic mantras without pronouns ing the Praṇava.[1] Most of the later law-givers also authorized them to perform the five Yajñas with the same limitation.[2] They had the right to perform the Nāma Karaṇa saṃskāra, i.e., the name-giving ceremony,[3] the funeral rites, and Śrāddha,[4] and to bestow gifts.[5] It can plausibly be held that some economically destitute Brāhmaṇas must have been performing sacrifices for the richer sections of the Śūdras, which made our authors condemn it only on the ground that it gives kingly position to the Śūdra, while the ṛṣi instructing him is reduced to a priestly vocation under him.[6] This may be an ingeniously ventilated resentment of the orthodox Brāhmaṇa circle against the priests instructing and receiving gifts from the foreign rulers, who, though detested as Śūdras, were promoted to Kṣatriyahood. However, the dictum of the passage in question seems to be applicable to the fourth social order in general.

Still, in comparison to the twice-borns, the ritual-status of the Śūdras was seriously impaired as they were not admitted to the Upanayana ceremony. Rathakāras, who had the right to the Upanayana ceremony[7] in earlier times, would not exactly represent the case of the Śūdras for they themselves came to be reduced approximately to the status of the Śūdras in later times.[8] It can be said that the Śūdras as labourers and artisans would have very little or practically no gain out of this ceremony. Nevertheless, the denial of Upanayana, inasmuch as it granted a ritual-status implying a social position and kept the door of education open, made the Śūdra theoretically humble and robbed him of the chance of liberal education. The householder's stage of life was the only āśrama open to them and, thus, they were debarred not only from education but also from the pursuit of asceticism and spiritual life[9] within the orthodox society.

But the law-givers' attempt to consolidate the traditional social orders could not have been directed to break the Śūdra class away from the orthodox fold, especially when there was a dire struggle between Brāhmaṇa orthodoxy and Buddhism for survival and popularity. The harsh sanctions of the Brāhmaṇic authors seem to be motivated by the urgency to control only those activities of the Śūdras which were disrupting the society. It was held proper for them "to associate with good men, devoted to righteousness, but never with the wicked."[10] A Śūdra of good conduct was

[1]Nīlakaṇṭha on *Mbh.*, BE. XII.60.37; Critical Edition, XII.60.36.
[2]*Yāj.*, I.121; *Vis. Sm.*, 21-20; *Vis. P.*, III.8.33; *Laghuviṣṇu.*, V.9; *Bd. P.*, II.12.19; *Vāyu. P.*, 76.19.
[3]*Manu*, II.31-32.
[4]ibid, V.57, 83, 99; *Yāj.*, I.121.
[5]*Vis. P.*, III.8.34; *Mat. P.*, 17.71.
[6]*Mbh.*, XIII.10.49-52; cf. *Manu*, III.156; 178; cf. *Vis. P.*, II.6.18.
[7]*Baud. Gr. Sūtra*, XIX.4.13.
[8]Vide Kane, *HDŚ*, II. Pt. I, p. 45. fn.
[9]vide *infra*, pp. 193-4.
[10]*Mbh.*, XII.282.3.

to get to heaven.[1] The denial of Vedic study to them was not a real loss in religious matters as long as they had access to the emerging religious sects and popular Brāhmaṇical religious texts, like the *Mahābhārata* and the Purāṇas whose recitation from a Brāhmaṇa they could lawfully hear.[2]

In fine, it can be said that by our time, the Brāhmaṇic thinkers show more catholicity to Śūdras. The factors responsible for this change seem to be the admission of foreign ruling elements to our society, the growing transformation of the artisan class into the Śūdra fold, the identical occupations of the Vaiśyas and Śūdras in the Āpaddharma context, and the intense desire of the Brāhamaṇas' to meet the challenge of heterodox movements, especially Buddhism by mixing strong sanctions against the Śūdras with many concessions to them. We have already seen the radical transformations brought about by Brāhmaṇa theologians by the institutionalization of non-Vedic popular worships into orthodox sects and opening them to all, which was bound to change the position of the Śūdras as well. However, the denial of the full-fledged ritual-status combined with their lean economic-status kept this class humble in our period. The economic disability seems to be a factor of greater importance than the ritual matter, otherwise the heterodox movements, especially Buddhism, would have emancipated this class from their low position.

7. Formation of Mixed Castes: A Deviant Social Phenomenon

The attempt of our law-givers to standardize and systematize the social order on the basis of the traditional Varṇa schemes seems to have been obsessed by the problem of caste deviations. There were both internal and external threats to this system which could lead to the disintegration of all the traditional social institutions. Internal threats were in the form of deviations from the rule of marriage and prescribed duties.[3] The external danger was posed by a large number of people[4] who did not belong to this system. The traditional theory of mixed castes, i.e., Varṇasaṃkara, was advanced as the response to this situation.

The Institution of Marriage and the Mixed Castes

The law-givers declare that deviations from prescribed marriage laws formed the most important cause to breed confusion of the castes.[5] Mixture of blood was held responsible for giving rise to mixed castes.[6]

The terms Anuloma and Pratiloma have been traced back to the Upaniṣads,[7] but the connotations of these terms as deviations from the

[1] *Vāyu P.*, 101.353; *Bd. P.*, IV.2.313-14.
[2] *Mbh.*, BE. XII.328.49; *Bhag. P.*, I.4.25.
[3] *Manu*, X.24.
[4] *Mbh.*, XIII.48.30.
[5] *Manu*, X.24; *Mit.* on *Yaj.*, I.96; cf. *GDS*, VIII.3.
[6] *Mbh.*, XIII.48.1; *Gītā*, I.40-42; *Mbh.*, III.180.31-33.
[7] Kane, op. cit., II, Pt. I, p. 52; Pāṇini, *Aṣṭādhyāyī*, IV.4.28.

ideal of endogamous marriages[1] seem to have been given by the authors of the Dharmaśāstras. The marriage of a Śūdra girl with the upper three Varṇas, especially the Brahmaṇa, was looked down upon,[2] even though it was permitted according to the Anuloma (inverse order) sanction. The Pratiloma (reverse order) marriage became an object of strong condemnation in the law-books.[3] According to Kauṭilya all the progeny of the Pratiloma connections except the Caṇḍālas, are equal to Śūdras.[4] Pratiloma marriage was so much despised that a progeny from even a Kṣatriya male and a Brāhmaṇa female is denied the right to the Vedic ceremonies.[5] The *Manusmṛti* mentions only three Anuloma castes i.e., Ambaṣṭha, Niṣāda and Ugra[6] while in the Pratiloma category it describes the Sūta, Vaidehaka, Cāṇḍāla, Māgadha, Kṣattā and Āyogava.[7] The exact blood relationship of these castes with their Varṇa parents often differs in different works. For instance, the Māgadhas are regarded as the Pratiloma-borns from a Vaiśya male and a Kṣatriya female by Gautama,[8] Kauṭilya,[9] and Manu[10] supported by the *Mahābhārata*.[11] But they are described as the progeny from the Vaiśya male and a Brāhmaṇa female also.[12] There are such differences regarding the other Varṇasaṃkaras like Niṣāda,[13] Vaidehaka,[14] Urga[15] etc. Nārada regards only the Pratiloma-borns as Varṇasaṃkaras.[16] *Mitākṣarā* takes Anuloma-borns also to be Varṇasaṅkaras.[17] Kullūka on Manu (X. 4) says 'there is no fifth Varṇa; for caste cannot be predicated of the mixed tribes . . . for like mules they belong to another species, distinct from that of their father and mother.[18] But Medhātithi on Manu (V.88) takes the Anuloma-borns also as cases of caste mixture, but recognises their privileges on the basis of their mothers' castes.[19] Manu enumerates various other Varṇasaṃkara formations from the marriages of Anuloma and Pratiloma castes, with the four major Varṇas which multiply

[1] *ĀDS*, II.6.13.1, 3-4.
[2] *GDS*, IV.1; *Manu*, III.4.12-19; *Yāj*., I.52, 56-61.
[3] *GDS*, IV.25; *Manu*, X.41; cf. *Vis. Sm*., 16.3; cf. *Mbh*., XIII.48.16-18.
[4] *KArth*., III.7.41-42; *Manu*, X.41.
[5] *Manu*, X.41.
[6] ibid, X.8-9.
[7] ibid, X.10-12.
[8] *GDS*, IV.17.
[9] *KArth*., III.17.
[10] *Manu*, X.11.17.
[11] *Mbh*., BE. XIII.48.12.
[12] *GDS*, IV.18; *BDS*, I.9.17.7.
[13] *GDS* (with Haradatta's Commentary IV.18.); cf. *BDS*, I.9.17.3; Anuśāsana Parva 48.4ff.
[14] *GDS*, IV.17; cf. *BDS*, I.9.17.3; *KArth*., III.7; *Mbh*., XIII.48.10.
[15] *GDS*, IV.16; cf. *BDS*, I.9.17.5; *KArth*., III.7; *Mbh*., XIII.48.7.
[16] *Nārada*, XII.102.
[17] *Mit*. on *Yaj*., I.96.
[18] *SBE*, XXII; *Manu*, X.4.
[19] cf. *Manu*, X.41; X.6.

on account of unions between these Varṇasaṃkara castes themselves.[1]

The Varṇasaṃkara castes were held as Vrātyas and their right to Sāvitrī Mantra was forfeited.[2] The Anuloma castes, however, were given considerable rights and status which were only slightly inferior to the status of their fathers.[3] In the *Mahābhārata*, a son of a Brāhmaṇa from a Brāhmaṇa female or a Kṣatriya female has a status equal to that of the father. But a Brāhmaṇa's son from a Vaiśya or a Śūdra female is given the lower status of the mother's caste.[4] The Anuloma-born, e g., a Brāhmaṇa's son from a Kṣatriya or Vaiśya female or a Kṣatriya's son from a or Vaiśya female etc., are entitled to perform the sacraments of the twice-borns.[5] The Anuloma marriages seem to have legal sanction.[6] The Anuloma-borns have also the right of inheritance of property of the Brāhmaṇa, Kṣatriya. Vaiśya or Śūdra fathers,[7] although in a passage Manu denies the same to the Anuloma-born from a Śūdra female.[8]

Thus we find that the Pratiloma-borns were held as Varṇasaṃkaras. The Anuloma marriages were still taken to be legal, though endogamous marriages were the ideal.

The Occupational Basis of the Mixed Castes

There were caste formations on occupational bases also. Sometimes it is expressed that the act or profession also decides one's caste.[9] Manu seems to identify the occupational castes with the Varṇasaṃkaras.[10] Again, he declares that the base-born ones (*apasada*) of the twice-borns or those produced on account of the violation of the law (*Apadhvaṃsaja*), shall subsist by occupations reprehended (*nindita*) by the twice-borns.[11]

Right from the Vedic period we find various artisan classes like blacksmiths,[12] carpenters,[13] rathakāras[14] (Chariotmakers) etc. In the Saṃhita and the Brāhmaṇa works we get such occupational groups as Kṣattṛ (doorkeeper), Saṃgrahītṛ (treasurer), Takṣan (carpenter), Rathakāra, Kulāla (potter), Karmāra, Puñjiṣṭha, Niṣāda, Ipukṛta, Dhanvakṛta, Mṛgayu,

[1] *Manu*, X.6-56; *Yāj*., I.90-95.
[2] *BDS*, I.9.16.16; cf. *VDS*, XVIII.7; *Manu*, X.20.25.
[3] *Manu*, X.3.6.18.
[4] *Mbh*., BE. XIII.48.4; *BDS*, I.9.17.3.
[5] *Manu*, X.41.
[6] ibid, III.43-4; I.62,
[7] ibid, IX.149-54; *Yāj*., II.128.
[8] ibid, IX.160.
[9] ibid, X.40; cf. *Mbh*., BE. XIII.48.29; see also Nesfield, *Brief View of the Caste System of the North-Western Provinces and Oudh*, Allahabad, 1885; cf. *VDS*, XVIII.7; *Manu*, X.57; *Viṣ. Sm*., 16.17; Saraswati, B.N., *Brahmanic Ritual Tradition*, p. 24.
[10] *Manu*, X.40.
[11] ibid, X.46.
[12] *ṚV*, VIII.5.38.
[13] ibid, I.61.4; IV.9.112.
[14] *AV*, III.5.6.

Ākheṭaka, Sūta, Grāmaṇī, Bhāgadugha, Akṣāvāpa[1] etc. Many of these and other such occupational groups came to form distinct castes. Most of such castes appear to form parallel social communities within the Vedic fold.[2] The emergence of these castes was based on their distinct occupations. But as time rolled on they developed customs and traditions of their own and were separated from the major Varṇas. In this connection, it is to be noted that many tribes like Niṣāda, Ḍoma, Pulindas, Pulkasas etc. were transformed into functional castes.[3]

Our authors have devoted considerable attention to describing the occupations of these castes and fixing up their blood relationships with the major Varṇas. For example, the Kārāvaras (Carmakāras), found in large numbers even now, are said to be born from double pratiloma, i.e., from Niṣāda males and Vaidehaka females.[4] Their distinct occupation is the work in leather.[5] The Maitreyakas, born from Vaidehas in Āyogava females, subsist by the profession of bell ringing and pleasing the king.[6] Pāṇḍusopāka born from Cāṇḍalas in Vaidehaka females deal in cane.[7] There were so many other castes of such types based on distinct occupations like Āyogava,[8] Upakustha,[9] Rajaka,[10] Karaṇa,[11] Cakrī[12] or oilman, Ugra,[13] Jalopajīvin or Kaivarta,[14] Śauṇḍika[15] etc. There was the caste of the Naṭas who even now-a-days subsist upon dramatic performances and acrobatics.[16] The Veṇas have their work in bamboos as their traditional profession.[17] The caste of Caṇḍālas seems to be the most despised one, though the Brāhmaṇical authors often tended to enlist this caste within the Śūdra Varṇa. The Caṇḍālas and Śvapacas often seem to be equally degraded castes. Their wealth were dogs and donkeys.[18] They used to carry corpses and were working as hangmen.[19] They were untouchables.[20] In

[1] *TSaṃ.*, I.8.9.1-2, 45.4.2; *MSaṃ.*, II.9.5; *TBr.*, I.1.1.8.

[2] vide Panikkar, *Hindu Society at Cross Roads*, 1961, pp. 29ff.

[3] vide Kane, op. cit., pp. 82ff; Chanana, D. R., *Slavery in Ancient India*, pp. 176-77.

[4] *Manu*, X.36; *Mbh.*, XIII.48.25.26.

[5] ibid, X.36. [6] ibid, X.33.

[7] ibid, X.37. [8] ibid, X.48; *Yāj.*, I.163; *Viṣ. Sm.*, 16.8.

[9] *BDS*, I.9.16; *Yāj.*, I.95; *Vaikhānasa*, X.13; Kane, op. cit., II, Pt. I, p. 65.

[10] The untouchable mixed caste and washerman by profession. Pāṇini, II.4.10; The same as the Rajaka of the Jātaka, VI, p. 276; Gāthā, 1197; *Manu*, IV. 216.

[11] *GDS*, IV.21; *Mbh.*, I.115.43; *Manu*, X.22.

[12] Same as Tailika.

[13] Fowller by profession like Niṣāda, *Manu*, X.48; *Uśanasa*, verse 41.

[14] Subsisting by fishery and killing animals, *Manu*, X.34.

[15] Dealers in wine, *Manu*, IV.216; *Yāj.*, II.48.

[16] *Manu*, X.23; Fick, *SONEIBT*, p. 199.

[17] Patañjali on Pāṇini. IV.1.97, II, p. 253; Kullūka on *Manu*, IV.215; *Mit*, on *Yāj.*, I.161.

[18] *Manu*, X.51.

[19] ibid, X.55-56.51.

[20] *Vāyu. P.*, 78.67; *Viṣ. P.*, III.11.51; III.16.13; *Mat. P.*, 184.64. Jha, Vivekanand, "Stages in the History of untouchables," *The Indian Historical Review*, II, i, 1975, p. 24f.; also pp. 14ff.

the account of Fa-Hsien also, Caṇḍāla's condition is described as very low.[1] The Brāhmaṇa authors' low estimation of the Caṇḍālas together with various other non-Vedic sections was based on the actual state of these communities in the society. That the upper classes, irrespective of their sectarian denominations, used to despise them is evidenced by the Buddhist texts which describe them as base-born, low caste, and untouchables.[2] We should not forget that the Caṇḍālas together with the Mṛtapas etc., despite all their low avocations and degraded conditions, are listed in the Śūdra Varṇa, of course, of 'Nirvasita' category.[3] To the extent their Śūdra-status was a thing of practical import it must have been militating in some degree against the social status of the Śūdras of 'Anirvasita' category.

There were the Antyajas who were also held low. They are described as the progeny of Caṇḍālas born from Niṣāda females. They lived around the crematorium.[4] The Antyajas sometimes are said to be comprised of many castes like Rajaka, Carmakāra, Naṭa. Buruḍa etc. and sometimes even Śūdras are also enlisted as such.[5]

All these castes formed on account of their occupations developed their customary laws and social conventions, which also had legal sanctions in case they were not opposed to the sacred laws of the Vedic society.[6] It seems that these functional groups crystallized into castes long before the authors of the Dharmaśāstras came to standardize them in relation to the Varṇa system. It also appears that certain castes like those of the Kaivartas, Bhillas, Caṇḍālas, Niṣādas etc. were originally the tribes which came into contact with the Varṇa people. These castes, through their occupations, were fulfilling some vital needs of the society. Besides the cultural pressure of these castes on the Varṇa system, their activities were feared by our authors.[7] Manu apprehends the increase of such castes and warns that the kingdom in which such bastards, sullying (the purity of) the castes, are born, perishes quickly together with its inhabitants.[8] The theoretical explanation of the Pratiloma blood relationships of these castes may not often correspond to facts, but at least this clearly shows the tendency of Pratiloma unions in society. The mixed caste theory seems also to be a warning to the upper classes against deviations from the prescribed marriage rules and their respective duties, a tendency not invisible in the society as we find Brāhmaṇas, not to speak of other Varṇas, fallen to the level of Śūdras and Caṇḍālas.[9]

[1]Giles, *Travels of Fa-Hsien*, p. 43.
[2]vide *infra*, p. 182; see *supra*, p. 153ff.
[3]Patañjali on Pāṇini, II.4.10.
[4]*Manu*, X.39; *Mit.*, on *Yāj.*, III.260. [5]*Atri Saṃhitā*, 199.
[6]*Manu*, IV.60-61; *Yāj* , I.273; Kane, *HDŚ*, p. 70.
[7]*Manu*, X.35.39; Vivekanand Jha. "From Tribe to Untouchable : The Case of Niṣādas," *Indian Society: Historical Probings*, Ed. R.S. Sharma, and V. Jha, Delhi, 1974, pp. 70-71.
[8]ibid, X.61. [9]vide *supra*, pp. 221-2.

Caste Formations on the Basis of Territorial Differences and Cultural Antagonism

A number of people of the outer fringe (i.e., Saṃkīrṇa-Yoni Pradeśa) of the ideal land of Vedic orthodoxy are held as belonging to mixed castes and any contact with them is despised and condemned.[1] These territorially foreign and culturally antagonistic peoples are said to have fallen on account of their defiance of the Vedic religious customs and are described as Vrātyas.[2] It may be noted that sometimes foreign people like Bāhlikas were also bracketed with the Vrātyas.[3] The term Vrātya is taken to denote the Varṇasaṃkara castes also.[4] The orthodox law-givers devised measures to bring these elements back to the Vedic fold in olden times through the soḍaśastoma and Vrātyastoma ceremonies.[5] However, these ceremonies could not subside the cultural antagonism as, from *circa* sixth century BC onwards, the ideal land of Vedism seems to be encircled by various heterogeneous peoples exerting considerable cultural pressure on orthodoxy and even rising into open revolt. The most prominent of these territorial mixed castes were Māgadhas, Vaidehas, Licchivis, Aṅgas and Vaṅgas in Eastern India; Bhojas, Sātvatas, Pauṇḍrakas, Andhras, Draviḍas and Niṣādas in the Deccan and Southern India; Pāraḍas, Kirātas, Pulindas and Pulkasas in the North-west regions of the country.

The cultural antagonism between the orthodox fourfold Varṇa system and the various parallel tribes of considerable antiquity was a continuing phenomenon of ancient Indian social history. *The Mahābhārata* says that those are not the twice-borns who cannot understand that every created being is the Supreme Brahma. These, falling away, become members of the various (inferior) castes.[6] "Destitute of the light of knowledge, living a loose life of dissolution they are born as Piśācas and Rākṣasas and Ghosts, and as Mlecha tribes."[7] Most of these non-Varṇa tribes, which had their own military organisations, exerted political pressure on the state. Kauṭilya prescribed various extraordinary devices to create dissentions in them so that they could easily be subjugated. Socially, they were claimed to the Varṇa system,[8] undoubtedly, giving them status of the mixed castes. But it is interesting to note that many of these tribes or the occupational caste were very often equated with the Śūdras which shows the tendency of the law-givers to steadily assimilate them in the orthodox fold. As in social matters, so in religious spheres, they were granted mostly the rights of Śūdra.[9]

[1] *BDS*, 1.2.13; vide *supra*, pp. 1-2.
[2] ibid, I.9.17.5; cf. *AV*, XV.
[3] vide Karmarkar, *Religions of India*, pp. 15ff.
[4] *BDS*, I.9.17.15-16. [5] *TMBr.*, 17.9.
[6] *Mbh.*, XII.181.17.
[7] ibid, BE.XII.188.18; Critical Edition, XII.181.18.
[8] vide *supra*, pp. 157-8.
[9] *KArth.*, III.7.41-42; Śūdrāṇām tu sadharmāṇaḥ sarve' padhvansajāḥ smṛtāḥ, *Manu*, X.41.

The theory[1] of Varṇasaṃkara speaks of the low estimation that the authors entertained about non-Varṇa tribes and occupational castes, but it essentially tends to bring these social groups under the jurisdiction of the orthodox law-givers.[2] Strangely enough the attempt at prevention of exogamy in order to consolidate the Varṇas and the assimilation of the non-Varṇa social groups within the orthodox society, at least in theory, are done by the same Varṇasamkara law. The countless classes and castes devoid of Dharma[3] could hardly fit anywhere in the four standard orders. The origin of such people is sometimes traced in the mixture of blood, and at other times explained away as the progeny originated from the different parts of the mythical being Veṇa[4]; still at another place, some of the antagonistic peoples are declared to be the progeny of Viśvāmitra who came to be degraded on account of father's curse.[5] Overall, the Varṇa system remains the dominant factor with Brāhmaṇas who employed the Varṇa standards as measuring-rods to determine the position of these social elements in relation to the orthodox culture.[6] It is significant to note that Manu proclaimed not only the customs of the four Varṇas but also that of mixed castes, who belonged to the land of Brahmāvarta, as conduct of viruous men.[7]

8. Brāhmaṇas and the Foreign Elements

Foreign invasions of India in the post-Mauryan period brought about a large settlement of foreign element in her north-west frontiers. While dealing with the nature of the Kali Age, we have seen that it was really a most testing time for the orthodox society. Foreign rulers, described as the Mlecchas, were granting favours to heterodoxy and the Śūdras while Brāhmaṇas were the main object of their oppression. According to the Brāhmaṇical texts, it was such a calamitous age that only a divine incarnation could rescue the people from its dark shadows. Due to the failure of military resistance against them, the responsibility of meeting their challenge fell to social and religious leaders.

These foreign people were sharply distinguished from the orthodox culture. They are described as fierce barbarians[8] and vultures.[9] Their oppression caused great resentment in orthodox circles and it was very hard for the Vedo-centric Brāhmaṇas to establish any amicable contacts with them. The problem must have been made all the more difficult by the

[1]Dutt, *OGCI*, I, p. 8; Jha, Vivekanand, "Varṇasaṁkara in the Dharma Sūtras: Theory and Practice," *Journal De L' Histoire Economique et Sociale De L' Orient*, XIII, iii, 1970, p. 280-1.

[2]Oldenberg, *ZDMG*, 51, Pt. 2, 1897; vide *IA*, XLIX, 1920, pp. 207ff.

[3]*Mbh.*, XIII.48.30; vide XIII. Chs. 47-48.

[4]ibid, BE. XII.59.39-96, 112.

[5]*ABr.*, VII.18; vide English translation Keith, *HOS*, XXV, 1920, p. 307.

[6]Ghurye, *Caste and Class in India*, p. 303.

[7]*Manu*, II.18; vide *SBE*, XXV, p. 32.

[8]*Mbh.*, VI.10.63ff. [9]ibid, XII.200.40-41.

inherent rigid character of the orthodox social system which held the non-Varṇa people as outsiders and was not easily prepared to come to terms with them. The Buddhists, in the initial stages, with their relative laxity and missionary zeal, were quick to take advantage of this tension between the foreigners and the orthodox society. They, in fact, enlisted the Greeks and the Schythians to their faith and enjoyed the militant patronage of these rulers.[1] This proselytizing spirit of the Buddhists sharply contrasted with the introvert tendency of the orthodox culture which would not permit the upper three classes even to settle outside the Āryandom.[2] But, as times passed by, extensive settlements of foreigners and the increasing cultural intercourse with them led the contemporary law-givers, howsoever reluctantly, to explain these elements in terms of the traditional social system. We propose to sketch out here this gradually growing rapport between the orthodox society of India and the incoming foreign elements.

The Yavanas alongwith some other tribal peoples of Northern regions like the Kāmbojas, Gāndhāras and Kirātas are held as barbarians.[3] It is interesting to note that in the *Mahābhārata* a passage describes the Yavana to have descended from Turvasu, the Bhojas from Druhyu, and the Mlecha tribes from Anu.[4] A clear distinction is made between the Yavanas and the Mlecchas here. An Aśokan edict informs us that the Yavanas were the only people among whom there were neither Brāhmaṇas nor Sramaṇas,[5] indicating that their small settlements in the North-west regions were yet nowhere within the Vedic Varṇāśrama system. In the post-Mauryan period, however, the Buddhists had cordial relations with them. Their land is extolled as meritorious for Nirvāṇa.[6] But very soon the Brāhmaṇas began to take steps to incorporate them in their social fold and we find that they are placed within the Śūdra class. Patañjali held them as Śūdras of higher social status.[7] Later, even the most conservative law-giver, Manu, makes an improvement in describing them as Kṣatriyas fallen to the status of Śūdras on account of negligence of the sacred rites and not consulting the Brāhmaṇas. Likewise, Ābhīras, Śakas, Kāmbojas, Gāndhāras, Cīnas, Kirātas, Pahlavas etc. are treated as the peoples who were reduced from the Kṣatriyahood to the position of Śūdras.[8]

We find that the Brāhmaṇic reactions to the incoming foreign elements were twofold. Initially they resented their cultural antagonism but later on resorted to assimilate them within the Varṇa system. The active contact

[1]vide *infra*, pp. 203ff.

[2]*Manu*, II.24.

[3]*Mbh.*, VI.9.65; XII.201.40; cf. *Rāmāy.*, IV.43.11ff.

[4]*Mbh.*, I.80.26.

[5]Rock Edict XIII, see Basak, *Aśokan Inscriptions*, Calcutta, 1959, pp. 66, 71-72; for the numismatic reference see Whitehead, *PMC*, I, pp. 37f., 3ff.

[6]*Milinda.*, ed. Trenckner, p. 327.

[7]Patañjali on Pāṇini, II.4.10; vide Kielhorn, I, p. 475.

[8]*Manu*, X.43-44; *Mbh.*, BE. XIII, 33.21-22, 35, 17-18; Critical Edition XIII.33.18-25; *Rāmāy.*, I.54.18; *Mbh.*, II.29.15, VI.9.65; XII.65.13-20; *Manu*, X.41, 42.

of these people with the orthodox society must have created a great confusion. In order to prevent the same, these fighters and rulers of outlandish extraction were ascribed Kṣatriya origin. But their cultural separatism and defiance of orthodox law led the law-givers to put them into the Śūdra order of 'Anirvasita' category which granted them the rights to perform minor sacrifices and use the Āryan dish.[1] Further, it is interesting to note that the *Mahābhārata*[2] and the *Rāmāyaṇa*[3] contain an identical description in which many of these foreign tribes are said to have comprised the army of Vasiṣṭha produced from the different parts of his cow, Nandinī, whom Viśvāmitra (representing the Kṣatra power) tried to snatch away forcefully from Vasiṣṭha. The army of these people subjugated Viśvāmitra, symbolizing the victory of the Brahma power (Vasiṣṭha) over the Kṣatra power. It is very difficult to trace any historicity of the events described in these passages. Nevertheless, the story is very significant in so far as it exposes the attempt of the authors to ascribe Indian origin (from the cow Nandinī) to these foreign people. Brāhmaṇas exerted for the acculturation of these people according to their own orthodox standards and to assimilate them within the Vedic fold. In response to a question of Māndhātṛ as to what constitutes the 'Dharma' of these[4] tribes, Indra is presented as making the following statement:

"All the robber tribes should serve their mothers and fathers, their preceptors and other seniors, and recluses living in the woods. All the robber (Dasyu) tribes should also serve the kings. The duties and rites inculcated in the Vedas should also be followed by them. They should perform sacrifices in honour of the 'Pitṛs' (manes), dig wells (and dedicate them to Universal service), give water to thirsty travellers, give away beds and make other seasonable presents unto Brāhmaṇas. Abstention from injury, truth, supression of wrath, supporting Brāhmaṇas and kinsmen by giving them their dues, maintenance of wives and children, purity, peacefulness, making presents to the Brāhmaṇas at sacrifices of every kind, are duties that should be practised by every person of this class who desires to own prosperity. Such a person should also perform all kinds of 'Pākayajñas' with costly presents of food and wealth."[5] These duties consisting of moral decency, ethical way of life, submission to the king, philanthropic works and cultural attainments prescribed for them, imply an attempt to get these people assimilated into the orthodox cultural fold. The list here includes Pākayajña and making of gifts. These were not extraordinary privileges for the Śūdra class, in which the foreign tribes were enlisted. They were already authorised to perform them. But the opening of the Vedic Dharma, rites,

[1]Patañjali on Pāṇini, vide *supra*, p. 154.
[2]*Mbh.*, I.165.35-36; I.165.4-44.
[3]*Rāmāy.*, Bālakāṇḍa Chs. 53ff.
[4]*Mbh.*, XII.65.13-16.
[5]*Mbh.*, XII.65.17.23. English translation P. C. Roy, *Mahābhārata* (XII.65.17-21), Calcutta, 1890, p. 209.

and sacrifices to them does not appear to be in the general spirit of conservatism, especially that of the Smṛtis. The injunctions of the *Mahābhārata* seem to be more in tune with the liberal trends of the time.

Brāhmaṇas' Problems in Acculturation and Role-Taking

The Brāhmaṇic propagation of the orthodox culture amongst various tribes, mostly aiming at recruiting the tribal and semi-savage people to the Śūdra class as agriculturists or artisans,[1] seems to have posed before them a number of obstacles. This acculturation ultimately amounted to a settled economic life under the supervision of a powerful political organisation, which was bound to meet a stubborn antagonism of the primitive people who cherished their age-old ideals of freedom and equality[2] and their primitive ritual and bond of kinship. In the modern times too, the aboriginal priest in a state of ecstacy cannot endure the presence of a cow or a Brāhmaṇa, for gods leave his head on their appearance.[3] The weak position of the tribal people is reflected by their timid gods but their attitude is marked with antagonism. Brāhmaṇas' ever assimilative attitude in the religious sphere seems to have helped them in securing a safe dwelling for themselves amidst such people. But their very penetration in the tribal society, especially in small numbers, might involve them in a counter process of getting themselves adept in tribal way of life, as is illustrated by the episode of Gautama[4] who becomes a hunter in the social milieu of a robber tribe. Brāhmaṇas away from the orthodox cultural pale do show serious deviations from their standard dharma. The *Karṇa Parva* describes[5] the Brāhmaṇas of the Vāhīka country lying in the north-western region as of very low conduct and fallen from the Vedic duties. Nay, in this region a Brāhmaṇa becomes[6] Kṣatriya, then Vaiśya or even Śudra and barber, though again he may become a Brāhmaṇa.

The institution of temple, whether originally of tribal deities like Durgā at Vindhyachal or installed by the Vedic people, provided the most effective means of socializing the orthodox cultural values and ideologies. However, the vehement condemnation[7] of the temple priests placing them in the category of the Śūdras posed to them a serious problem from within. But the acute competition with heterodoxy in enlisting the patronage of the masses led the temple institution to flourish with composite ritual and deities. The āśrama complex of the Brāhmaṇic sages, serving as centres of education too, pushed forward the process of acculturation as the Śrauta and Smārta dharma used to be preached[8] in these habitats. The

[1] *Vis. P.*, 1. Ch. 13; *Mbh.*, XIII.48.32-33; Bose, *The Structure of Hindu Society*, 1975, p. 58ff; Singer, M., Ed., *Krishna: Myths, Rites, and Attitudes*, Chicago, 1971, p. 64ff.

[2] Chattopadhyaya, *Lokāyata*, pp. 467ff; Bhattacharyya, N. N., *Ancient Indian Ritual and Their Social Contents*, Delhi, 1975, pp. 41-2.

[3] Crooke, *The Popular Religion and Folklore of Northern India*, I, p. 158.

[4] *Mbh.*, BE. XII. Ch. 169. [5] BE. Chs. 44, 45, 46.

[6] *Mbh.*, BE. VIII.45.6-7 and 8.

[7] see *supra*, pp. 137-38. [8] *Mat. P.*, Ch. 143.

legends and myths in the Epics and Purāṇas such as those of Prahlāda and Bali[1] were to serve the same purpose; hence their recitation to the lower strata of people.[2] Besides, the land grants to the Brāhmaṇas, which became so numerous from the Gupta time onwards, involved them directly in the task of organising the agricultural economy. When such grants lay in the outskirts of the Vedic pale, they must have drawn the primitive people to the Neo-Orthodox socio-economic structure.

What seems to be the most difficult situation for Brāhmaṇas must have cropped up in substituting the primitive Shamans or in taking[3] up their role. In a comparatively less stratified primitive society the Shamans functioned as priests, sorcerers, medicinemen, magicians etc. By our time the Brāhmaṇa-priests, who used to perform these roles, dropped many of them from their field of specialization. With the advancement of knowledge, some of the Shamanic functions of the Vedic priests had already passed to the secular field in the orthodox society. But among the primitive people the Shamans were the most dominant divine agents. Berreman's[4] study of the inhabitants of village Sirkhand and its vicinity in the Himalayan region shows that the Shaman is the real 'cultural policy maker who diagnoses the causes of trouble, determines the deity to be worshipped, the mode of ceremony and sacrifice, pilgrimage to be undertaken' etc.[5] Their co-operation helps the Pahari Brāhmaṇas in introducing the religious practices of the plain.[6] But the superiority of the orthodox culture makes steady impact on them, transforming the cultural norms and customs of the tribal people. To cite again the instances of the primitives surviving into modern times, the Saora Shamanin, besides her usual husband, marries also the deity who, as supposed to be a Hindu, obliges her to 'observe many rules of taboo of the Hindus caste.'[7] She 'strictly observes rules of menstruation which are not practised by Saoras generally.'[8] The Saora priest, Buyya is at times equated with the Brāhmaṇa.[9] Further, the shrine of a popular local godling Bhumiya around Delhi is served by a priest of the sweeper caste. But in the ceremony of harvest, marriage, child-birth etc. done in honour of the same deity, Brāhmaṇas are fed in his name.[10] The process of assuming the role of a tribal Shaman or replacing a low caste priest should have become quite easy when the local deity becomes identified with the great sectarian gods as Bhumiya was identified with Viṣṇu.[11] The phenomena of Brāhmaṇas' taking up Shaman role

[1] *Mbh.*, BE. XII. Chs. 218-21.
[2] *supra*, p. 157f.
[3] Kosambi, D. D., *Myth and Reality*, Bombay, 1962, pp. 166-7, also pp. 28-29.
[4] Berreman, *Hindus of the Himalayas*, California, p. 133.
[5] Berreman, op. cit., p. 134.
[6] ibid.
[7] Elwin, *The Religion of An Indian Tribe*, p. 160. [8] ibid.
[9] ibid, p. 130.
[10] Crooke, op. cit., I, p. 95.
[11] ibid, I, pp. 105, 107.

continued up to modern times. In a village an aboriginal 'Kola' priest before his death declared that the 'god had sat on the head of a Brāhmaṇa candidate for the priestly office, who took up the position of the village Ojha.[1] The Brāhmaṇa priests are helped by the traditional Gond bard 'Pradhan' in the propagation of orthodox cultural ideologies and customs in the villages along the river Narmada.[2]

9. Brāhamaṇas Techniques of Social Control

Classes based on functional divisions were laid down by Plato for an ideal City-State in his Republic,[3] which in form resemble the Varṇa structure. Likewise, such functional classes were actually existent in ancient Iran[4] and mediaeval Europe.[5] But the simple functional classes reduced to the complex caste system remained by far the most outstanding feature of the the Indian society and, consequently, is incomparable to any such institutions of other countries[6] in point of its longevity. The orthodox social structure seems to be strengthened by a network of systematization and effective techniques adopted for its consolidation by the Brāhmaṇa lawgivers of our age against the disintegrating forces of challenge from various quarters. The orthodox society, caught in the troubles of rapid political changes, unprecedented alien contracts, antagonistic religious movements, enormous socio-political pressure of the Non-Varṇa peoples and tribes, and, especially, faced with the problems created by the impact of economic transformations, required systematization and standardization of the social structure along with measures to consolidate it. It is truly said that "any sudden or rapid changes create crisis in the whole system of social behaviour and make apparent the necessity of new controls."[7] The measures evolved for curbing deviations tend to exercise control[8] on individual behaviour. Parsons is of the opinion that "it would be surprising indeed if a highly important functional role were not played by control mechanism."[9] . . . It is generally agreed that "social control is exercised through social pressure varying in kind from indirect suggestions, ridicule, praise, blame, urging respect for tradition and custom to more direct

[1]Crooke, op. cit., I, p. 157; see also, Bose, op. cit., p. 43 and 58-71; also Singer, Ed, op. cit., pp. 64ff.

[2]Fuchs, *The Gond and Bhumia of Eastern Mandla*, p. 190.

[3]*Plato's Republic*, Book II, vide *Five Great Dialogues*, English translation by Jowett and ed. by Ropes Loomis, New Jersey, 1942, pp. 253-88.

[4]Max Duncker, *History of Antiquity*, Abbot, V, pp. 184-200.

[5]Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, 1956, pp. 366ff. [6]vide *ESS*, III, pp. 254ff.

[7]Gillin and Gillin, *An Introduction to Sociology*, New York, 1947, p. 11.

[8]'Social Control' seems to be a significant term for our study. It is taken to be 'a collective term for those processes, planned or unplanned, by which individuals are taught, persuaded, or compelled to conform to usages or life-values of groups." vide Joseph S. Roucek, *Social Control*, II Ed., New York, 1956, p. 3.

[9]Talcott Parsons, *Essays in Sociological Theory* (Revised Edition), 1963, U.S.A., pp. 148-49.

ostracism, denial of privilege, imprisonment, and death."[1] Various provisions of the law-givers of our time seem to have constituted such sanctions as to control the deviant behaviours of the Varṇa and Non-Varṇa People alike.

The preservation of the Varṇa structure in its theory and practice was of vital importance for the interiorization of the orthodox cultural ideologies which granted political, religious, and economic power and prestige to the twice-borns, shared by them in relative degrees. 'Since the existence of a given ideology in the cultural context does not make it mandatory that it be accepted,'[2] its reification is most 'effectively accomplished by status group.' In fact the status group mechanism of the orthodox social system was instrumental in socialization of the norms and values of Vedic culture. We propose to lay bare some of the important devices of social control.[3]

Political Sanction

Varṇāśrama system, the orthodox ideal of social life, was sought to be protected by every means. To uphold it was one of the primary duties of the king. The laws of Manu seek to establish the cult of power, i.e., supremacy of Daṇḍa in order to promote Dharma and the general welfare of the society[4] and prevent the mixture of castes.[5] He says: the king is created by God to protect the Varṇas and the Āśramas.[6] We have already noted his warnings to the king against the disruptive activities of the Vaiśyas and the Śūdras. Earlier authors like Āpastamba,[7] Baudhāyana,[8] Gautama,[9] Vasiṣṭha,[10] Kauṭilya[11] and later works like the *Yājñavalkyasmṛti*,[12] the *Viṣṇu Smṛti*,[13] the Purāṇas,[14] *Nāradasmṛti*,[15] the *Atrisaṃhitā*,[16] etc. have all exhorted the king to maintain the Varṇāśramadharma which, in crisis, has to be upheld by all the classes even with the help of arms.[17] The kings of our period took pride in putting these injunctions into practice.[18]

[1]Gillin and Gillin, op. cit., p. 522.
[2]LaPiers, *The Theory of Social Control*, p. 277.
[3]ibid.
[4]*Manu*, VII.17-23; see Radcliffe-Brown, on 'Organized Sanctions—negative or penal' in *ESS*, XIII, pp. 532-33.
[5]ibid, VII.24.
[6]*Manu*, VII.35; cf. *Mbh.*, XIII.153.31ff.
[7]*ĀDS*, II.1.2.2-3.
[8]*BDS*, II.2.4.4.1.
[9]*GDS*, VII.25; XI.9-10.
[10]*VDS*, XIX.1-8.
[11]*KArth.*, I.3.17.
[12]*Yāj.*, I.361.
[13]*Viṣ. Sm.*, 3.5.
[14]*Mat. P.*, 215.63.
[15]*Nārada*, XII.113.
[16]*Atri Saṃhitā*, 17.
[17]*KArth.*, I.3.14.
[18]vide *infra*, p. 215ff.

It is to be noted that mutual cooperation of the spiritual and the temporal powers is emphasized even in the Vedic texts where the king is held as protector of Dharma, Brāhmaṇas, and the people. But the keen desires of later authors to utilise his political office for the preservation and promotion of the Varṇāśramadharma suggest growing troubles for orthodoxy. The Varṇa Dharma was based to a great extent on tradition and when the validity of tradition was challenged by new emerging heterodox forces the supreme authority of the Śrutis, representing tradition, became an object of attack. The compositions of the Śrauta literature, the Dharmaśāstras, the Smṛtis, and digests mark successive stages of Brāhmaṇical efforts of standardisation of the social orders. The antagonistic forces could not have been neutralized only by an emphasis on traditional or religious sanctions. The laws of Manu clearly show how greatly political measure was required to set the prevalent chaos in order. Besides the challenges of the heterodox Buddhists and Jainas, an acute tension prevailed between the Varṇa society and the non-Varṇa castes and tribes. Kauṭilya's political measures against them seem to have no parallel. Manu puts forth his theory of 'Āpadharma' in his tenth chapter to meet the challenging situation created by the pressure of non-Varṇa groups and castes, but he also seeks political support for the maintenance of Varṇāśramadharma.

Besides, another category of motivation of social control is the self-interest, whether direct or indirect, of the group which brings about the control mechanism in operation. The most glaring self-interest of the Brāhmaṇas appears to be the consolidation of their own status[1] which granted them rank, privileges, and power. As regards the power-position of the Brāhmaṇas, its sources seem to be varied. Monopoly of accumulated knowledge, mastery of priestcraft, and traditional law made them unrivalled experts[2] to exert influence on society.[3] We have seen that as theologians they brought considerable changes in society by laying down various norms, beliefs, tenets, and ideals. By following the ethical[4] way of life and sacrificing material gains, they got a position in society to exhort the people for upholding their traditionally assigned duties. The influence of the Brāhmaṇas based on these sources could, naturally, operate even without the support of state power. In our period, it is apparent that the Brāhmaṇas laid greater emphasis on 'Political Sanction,' 'which by implication means that they sought active support of 'coercive power.'[5] It seems that political power was especially required in the case of the failure of other forms of influences on society. Really speaking, in our age, the

[1]vide *supra*, pp. 117-20ff.

[2]see for the theory of 'Expert Power' *Current Studies in Social Psychology*, ed. by Ivan D. Steiner and Martin Fishein, New York, 1965, p. 373, Niyogi, P., *Brahmanic Settlement in Different Subdivisions of Ancient Bengal*, p. 1 and 4.

[3]*Mbh.*, BE. XIII.151.10-12., Critical edition, XIII. 136.2-23

[4]*Manu*, IV. 186., *Rāmay*, I.6.13; *Yāj.*, I.129; *Smṛticandrikā*, I, p. 173.

[5]*Current Studies in Social Psychology*, Ed. by Ivan D. Steiner and Martin Fishein, New York, 1965, p. 373; *Sociological Theory*, ed. by Coser and Rosenberg, 1964, p. 146.

political power was one of the most important factors which made possible the consolidation of their (Brāhmaṇas') status.[1] It can be said that 'the control through religious institutions added the punitive power of the state to their teachings and influence . . . . ,' while, the state, in turn, 'used religious sanctions to maintain its control.'[2] In spite of these facts, the power-position of the Brāhmaṇas, in general, was more of the influence-type than authoritative in their relation to both state and people. If power is taken to mean 'the capacity to carry out, by whatever means a desired course of action, despite the resistance of others and without having to take into consideration their needs,'[3] it is difficult to accept that the Brāhmaṇas exercised such an absolute authority. As regards the legitimacy[4] of Brāhmaṇas' claim to power-position, it was based on the tradition.[5]

Metaphysical Sanction

The Brāhmaṇa law-givers adopted the ingenious technique of ontological orientation to consolidate the social system. The ideal of 'Svadharma' had metaphysical sanctions. The theories of Karma and transmigration of soul are duly identified[6] with and harnessed to social psychology in order to strengthen the social structure. The whole of the twelfth chapter of the *Manusmṛti* is devoted carefully to work out the application of this theory. Manu declares that all actions of a man produce, without fail, either good or bad results.[7] The consequence of any action originated through mental sin leads to low-caste birth in the next life.[8] The judgement of Yama is impending on all the actions of the individual.[9] The action of man is judged by the standard of social morality and traditional values accepted as proper for different Varṇas.[10] Value judgment of action is guided by Sātvika, Rājasa, and Tāmasa attributes, which human Karma is bound to cause as its result. Merit or demerit gained by actions brings for the individual either the state of gods and human beings or the life of beasts in the next birth.[11]

The psycho-metaphysical basis of the Varṇa system gave it a sound and unshakable character. Manu declares that those men of the four castes who have relinquished their proper occupations without the pressures of necessity will become the servants of Dasyus, after migrating into despicable

[1]Max Weber, *Religions of India*, pp. 38-45.
[2]Roucek, *Social Control*, 2nd Ed., p. 104.
[3]Harry C. Bredemeier and Richard M. Stephenson, *An Analysis of Social System*, New York, 1962, pp. 49-50.
[4]Ivan D. Steiner, op. cit., pp. 371-81.
[5]Goldhamer and Shils, "Power and Status," vide *Sociological Theory*, ed. Lewis A. Coser and Bernard Rosenberg, 1964, pp. 134-35.
[6]*Manu*, XII.40-41; *Yāj.*, III.137-9; see Radcliffe-Brown on Religions Sanction, *ESS*, XIII, pp. 531-532.
[7]ibid, XII.3. [8]ibid, X11.9.
[9]ibid, X.21ff.
[10]ibid, XII.31-33ff.
[11]ibid, XI1.40.

bodies.[1] Even Kauṭilya says that heaven is gained by the observance of one's 'Svadharma.'[2] The Gītā also has the same to preach.[3] Manu promises a higher caste in the next birth to a dutiful Śūdra.[4]

The doctrine of rebirth and Karma integrated into the social obligation of 'Svadharma,' provided double sanctions behind the Varṇa system. Firstly, a low birth in the present life is explained as the result of sinful actions of the past life; and secondly, no matter how low is one's own Dharma, strict adherence to it (even if performed incompletely) yields enough merit to fetch betterment in this world and world beyond. The theory of 'Svadharma' supports social inequality but at the same time makes this inequality immaterial in a subtle way, as the performance of 'Svadharma' yields the same merit to the members of all the four classes.[5] The psycho-social motivation of the theory seeks to keep the classes confined to the prescribed limits of their Dharmas. The subtle doctrine of an all-pervading supreme Soul which animates all creatures, was a significant factor in the metaphysical explanation of the Varṇa Dharma. It became a unique technique, fully marked by the time of the Upaniṣads,[6] to consolidate the social system on an intellectual plane.

Religion, to the extent it operates 'to bring the relative, the temporary, the disappointing, the painful things in life into relation with what is conceived to be permanent, absolute, and cosmically optimistic,'[7] functions to explain the social situations of all categories especially where 'socially defined reality' is 'threatened by lurking 'irrealities—death situation etc.'[8] The doctrine of rebirth transfused in the theory of Karma explains away in a curious way the sufferings like disease, death, poverty and even the Varṇa inequalities. On the other hand its promise of identical emancipation to all the Varṇas in the world beyond seeks to justify the social inequalities. It provides a unique ideological equilibrium to the social disparity. This doctrine must have formed an effective mechanism of control against social deviations. The overwhelming proportion of theodicy underlying in the Karma-Saṃsāra theory makes it the most consummate ideological apparatus of holding the oppressor and oppressed together, legitimizing both these social situations. Likewise, ascetic self-mortification and austerities too, a negative protest against the material prosperity of the richer section of society, may have given in a subtle way a 'meaning' to the sufferings of the lower strata of society. Asceticism, essentially a poor man's creed,[9] should have indirectly justified Śūdras' poor

[1] *Manu*, XII.70-71ff.
[2] *KArth.*, I.3.14.
[3] *Gītā*, XVIII.45; III.35; XVIII.41-47; cf. *Mbh.*, BE. III.3.75-84; *Bhāg. P.*, III.6.34.
[4] *Manu*, IX.335.
[5] vide Mees, *Dharma and Society*, London, 1935, pp. 152ff.
[6] vide *supra*, pp. 11-12.
[7] Milton Yinger, *Religion in the Struggle for Power*, 1945, p. 5.
[8] Peter L. Berger, *The Social Reality of Religion*, p. 24.
[9] *Mbh.*, XIII.94.31.

lot whose toilsome duties are held in the supramundane framework as 'ugratapasyā,'[1] (performed by Aśvinīkumāras, the Śūdra among gods).

Ritual Mechanism of Social Control

The social control through ritual is more subtle and is brought about symbolically, dramatizing the social situation of protest and compromise in spiritual framework. The ritual devices 'fulfil a positive cathartic function'[2] aiming at holding the social groups together.

To illustrate an example, the myth developed on the legendary sacrifice of Dakṣa Prajāpati seems to be invented to express the existing tension between the Śūdras or tribal people (*gaṇas*), whose religious leader is Śiva, and the élite, more particularly the political power represented by Dakṣa who is expressly called a king. Śiva's share in sacrifice was the very root cause of the whole crisis, which, according to his consort should be half or one third.[3] In this mythological texture, giving away of his virgin daughter Satī by Dakṣa in marriage to Śūdra-like Śiva[4] may signify the assignment of virgin land to the tribal people. The trouble arising therefrom in the form of their cryptic clamour for a better share of produce seems to be expressed in the claim of Śiva's sacrificial ṣhare. This import of Satī gets further support from the fact that in another context her Pārvatī-Durgā form as Sītā is identified with earth and ploughman.[5] The end of Dakṣa's story is not less interesting. After the dramatic destruction of the sacrifice by the attendants of Śiva and by his Vīrabhadra form, the rite is completed with the latter's blessings. But curiously enough, the sacrificial share granted to him by the gods (signifying élite) is still the remnant of the sacrifice.[6] If this myth is not taken as reflecting a social situation, it is impossible to determine its temporal import. Besides, without some kind of social basis the formation of this sort of story is hardly possible.

This story of Dakṣa's sacrifice seems to have served as 'a cathartic release mechanism'[7] for the underlying social tension not 'expressed in normal social relationships.'[8] Ritual, being action, 'not mere speculation,' produces 'resemblances' for a practical purpose.'[9] The ritual technique, having 'a

[1] *Mbh.*, XII.201.23(a).

[2] Gluckman, Ritual of Rebellion. *International Encyclopaedia of Social Science*, 1962, under Ritual, pp. 205-11.

[3] These claims in the mythical context cannot be related to the general provision of the $\frac{1}{6}$th as the rate of state levy on production (*Mbh.*, BE. XII.284.23). The tribal people, whom the gaṇas of Śiva represent, as landless agricultural labourers might have been getting relatively a very meagre share in produce.

[4] *Bhag. P.*, IV.2.13; see also G.P. Upadhyay, 'Social Perspective of Dakṣa Prajāpati's Sacrifice,' *IHC*, (Proce), 1973, pp. 126-29.

[5] *HV. P.*, 2281, vide Hopkins, *EM*, p. 79.

[6] *Bhāg. P.*, IV, Ch. 2; *Mbh.*, BE. XII. Chs. 284 and 285.

[7] Gluckman, op. cit., p. 525.

[8] ibid, p. 525; see also Radcliffe-Brown, *International Encyclopaedia of Social Science*, under Ritual, p. 523.

[9] Hocart, *Social Origin*, p. 24.

meaning far beyond the immediate act or its supposed end,[1] operates in social milieu patterning and preserving class relationships. Such function of ritual is found even in modern society, as in America it is instituted for "keeping the Negroes in their place."[2]

Marriage Laws

The institution of marriage was another important factor in the consolidation of the caste system. We have already seen that while anuloma unions were given legal sanctions, the pratiloma marriages were vehemently condemned. Sometimes even the anuloma union between higher castes and the Śūdras was strongly discouraged.[3] In spite of this attempt to standardize marriage laws both of the above types of marriages were prevalent in the society. The anuloma type continued well up to the ninth century AD or so.[4] But endogamous marriages were progressively held to be the most commendable. Exogamy was prescribed only in relation to the 'gotra' and 'pravara'[5] Again, the restriction was imposed on Sapiṇḍa marriage, i.e., blood relation on the mother side.[6] But the other law-givers have accepted this restriction only for the blood relationship within seven degrees on the father's side and five degrees on the mother's side.[7]

Slowly and steadily, marriage laws were approximated to actual practice which led to not only the process of hardening of the classes into castes but created social segregation, though it helped, to some degree, in the prevention of confusion of castes and mixture of blood, which were the motives of the law-givers. As a matter of fact, 'various societies and cultures of the world have, without exception, established ways in which the behaviour of persons is regulated with respect to sex, marriage and the family.'[8]

Further, it is noteworthy that in standardization of marriage laws, there appears an attempt to bring about social control through 'promise' and 'ostracism.'[9] The Brāhmaṇic theory of rise (Jātyutkarṣa) and fall (Jāty-apakarṣa) of caste, which is based on marriages in ascending or descending orders, takes seven generations to complete the process of full-fledged change of castes.[10] The authors' affirmation to the question of the change

[1]Goode, *Religion Among Primitives*, London, 1951, p. 49.

[2]LaPiere, *The Theory of Social Control*, p. 270.

[3]vide *supra*, pp. 158ff ; *Manu*, III.15-19; *Vis. Sm.*, 26.5; cf. *Yāj.*, I.91-92.

[4]vide Kane, *HDŚ*, II, pp. 449-50.

[5]*GDS*, IV.2; *VDS*, VIII.1; *Vis. Sm.*, 24.9; *Yāj.*, 1.53; cf. *Gobh. Gr. Sūtra*, III.4.4.

[6]*Manu*, III.5; *Vaikh. Dh. Pr.*, 24.9; *Gobh. Gr. Sūtra*, III.4.5, *ĀDS*, II.5.11.16.

[7]*Yāj.*, I.53; *Viṣ. Sm.*, 24.10; cf. *GDS*, IV. 2; *VDS*, VIII.2.

[8]Roucek, *Social Control*, New York, 1956, p. 119.

[9]Defiance of traditionally prescribed practices also leads to ostracism of the members of orthodox society from their respective classes. see *Manu*, X.43; II.103; *Mbh.*, XII. 181, 1-13; *Vis. P.*, IV.1.17; *BDS*, II.17.15.

[10]*Manu*, X. 64-65 with commentaries of Medhātithi, Govindarāja, Kullūkabhaṭṭa, Rāghavānanda thereunder; *GDS*, IV.22 with Haradatta's commentary, vide *SBE*, II, p.

of caste seems to be somewhat impracticable on account of its being a process stretching over to life beyond.

Rules about Commensality

It is laid down that a Brāhmaṇa student who has returned home would not eat in the houses of the people belonging to the lower classes, i.e., Kṣatriyas, Vaiśyas, and Śūdras.[1] But we have already seen as to how, on certain conditions, the food of the upper grades of Śūdras was allowed to the Brāhmaṇa by Manu and Yājñavalkya.[2] The tendency to prohibit commensality began to grow in our period which, apart from marriage rules, became the biggest cause to create caste stratification. According to Manu no one should eat food seen by a Cāṇḍāla, a village pig, a cock, a dog, a menstruating women.[3] This rule applies to the Brāhmaṇas also. Again Manu[4] lays down that death becomes eager to overtake the life-span of a Brāhmaṇa for the fault of eating food attached with blemishes. The strict rules[5] about the manner, time, and place of eating together with the types of articles interdicted to the Brāhmaṇas sound strange. The rigidness of the dicta reaches their height when we find that the food cooked by even family members is not held free from blemishes.

The complex rules about eating appear to have been greatly influenced by the primitive custom of food-taboos which the law-givers employed to solidify the class structure. The food from unknown persons or from a member of another tribe, and cooked food taken out of the village boundry, were held as impure. Such impurity is believed to be caused by the evil spirits which enter the food if proper manners of eating are not observed. Even in modern times many primitive tribes observe such taboos[6] about food.

The efforts of the Brāhmaṇas in laying down the provisions amounting to the social control was obviously motivated by the pressing need 'to bring about conformity, solidarity and continuity'[7] of the social order. It is to be noted that social philosophers of all grades and ages recognise the necessity of a degree of solidarity for the very existence of society.[8] Without specific mechanism of control the maintenance of the equilibrium

196fn. Yāñjavalkya, however, gives the theory of change of caste on occupational basis rather than the change of blood, but he also makes it a long process of several generations *Yāj.*, I.96, with *Mitākṣarā* commentary; see also *Mbh.*, XIII. Ch. 131.

[1] *ĀDS*, I.6.18.9; I.5.17.1. [2] vide *supra*, p. 155.

[3] *Manu*, III.239-40.

[4] ibid, V.4.

[5] ibid, VI.207-32; *Yāj.*, I.167, 181; *Mbh.*, XII, Chs. 37 and 79.

[6] Elwin, *The Religion of an Indian Tribe*, pp. 132ff, 522ff; Fuchs, *The Gond and Bhumia of Eastern Mandla*, 1960, pp. 197ff; Sachchidananda, *Profiles of Tribal Bihar*, Calcutta, 1965, p. 32; Frazer, *Aftermath*, London, 1936, pp. 227-34; Steiner, *Taboo*, London, 1956, p. 60f.

[7] Young, *Sociology*, Cincinnati, 942, p. 898.

[8] J.P. Gillin and J.L. Gillin, *An Introduction to Sociology*, p. 511.

of society even in normal times would hardly be possible.[1] In an age of crisis, as our period of study was, the authors seem to have felt the urgency to revitalise the control measures for the realisation of their goal of social consolidation.

The Economic Sanction

Economic sanction was one of the most vital instruments of preserving the Varṇa order and keeping-up the élite's ideologies. A large number of such sanctions can be sorted out from the provisions bearing upon the duties and obligations of all the four Varṇas. We illustrate some of them here.

The provisions disqualifying the fa'len Brāhmaṇas[2] from Śrāddha feast, gift, and ministering to sacrifice would certainly make the Brāhmaṇas closely follow their prescribed duties. The economic sanction against the king was not direct or very pungent. But the author's have laid down positive sanctions expressing their strong disapproval of the unrighteous rule, which must have exerted enough pressure to keep the king functioning with due regard to social ideologies. At least theoretically the king is entitled to revenue as his wages for fulfilling his duty of protecting the people.[3] The king who, while realising the dues, does not protect his subject, goes to hell and is branded as a thief.[4] The king who does not protect the people should be deserted.[5] A non-sacrificing Vaiśya's right to property is in a precarious position in the law of Manu.[6] Likewise, the provision that a barber desirous of going to the forest as an ascetic or a cowherd inclining to settle in the town are to be shunned[7] amounts to economic sanction against them in case of deviation from their traditional vocations.

In the urban society, such economic sanctions might not have been always of much effect but in the rural life they must have exerted considerable influence to keep individuals within their caste structure.[8]

The Symbolic Function of the Yuga Concept: A Frame of Reference to Right Social Order

The concept of four Yugas also, as found in the authors of our age, serves as a basic pointer to the cultural behaviour of people. In deviant social situations it makes the devices of social control operate properly. In delineating the four ages our authors invariably present the Satya and

[1]Parsons, *Essays In Sociological Theory*, p. 148.
[2]*supra*, pp. 63-4.
[3]*Baudhāyana Gṛhyasūtra*, I.10.18.1.
[4]Jha, *Revenue System in Post-Maurya and Gupta Period*, p. 18; see also *Manu*, VIII.307.
[5]*Mbh.*, BE. XII.58.44-45.
[6]*supra*, pp. 152.
[7]*Mbh.*, BE. XII.58.45.
[8]LaPiere, op. cit., p. 231; see A.L. Epstein for the concept and mechanism of 'Social Sanctions', *IESS*, 14, pp 1-5.

Kali Yugas diametrically antagonistic to each other in their typical characteristics. This conceptualized picture of social contrast seems to have been devised to function as a symbolic frame of reference to society in both its negative and positive aspects. This concept draws a demarcation between the ideally conceived cultural behaviour and sharp deviations of the society from the same.

Much against the cyclic concept of the ages, the king is said to be the source of social characteristics of a particular age because the right order of society depends on his rule.[1] The absence of political power reduces the society to wholesale disorder which is a condition quite contrary to those of Satyayuga.[2] Apart from it, whenever falsehood, delusion, lethargy drowsiness, violence, agony, sorrow, fear etc. are ascendant, that age is termed as Kali, dominated by dark qualities.[3] Again, fall of dharma, rise of heterodox sects, scarcity of the followers of the Vedic faith, dominance of the Śūdras, growth of population, short span of life, negligence shown to god, Brāhmaṇas, and cleanliness, fall in the morality of women, deviations from Varṇa duties constituted Kali conditions,[4] which make society suffer from serious retrogression. The *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* (1.17.1-7) presents Kali as a Śūdra king beating dharma, existing in the form of a cow. Kali's special dwellings are gambling, wine, women, violence and gold.[5] These attributes are contrasted with Satyayuga which represents the ascendancy of the values of truthfulness, kindness, austerity, and charity.[6] Untruthfulness, intoxication or conceit (Mada), cupidity, enemity etc. are the source of Kali, which are to be shunned by the righteous king, secular leaders of men, and the teachers of dharma.[7] It was Kali's machination which brought ruin to Nala.[8] The Satyayuga is symbolised by the establishment of non-violent sacrifice, the Varṇa order, and the Vedic Dharma.[9] The people stricken with downright degeneration of Kali[10] take up the righteous values to re-establish Satyayuga conditions.[11] The symbolic function of the Yuga attributes become clear when the same age is said to be appearing at one time as Kali but at another as Satyayuga in the likeness of the dark and bright cycles of the moon.[12]

Thus, in one of its varying imports,[13] the concept of the Yugas, is formulated by the theologians to serve as a measure for judging the actual

[1] *Vis. P.*, VI.1.44.
[2] *Mbh.*, BE. XII.69.86-96.
[3] *Bhāg. P.*, XII.3.30.
[4] *Vis. P.*, VI.1.44ff; ibid, VI.1.16-23.
[5] *Bhāg. P.*, I.17.38.
[6] ibid, I.3.18-22.
[7] ibid, XII.18.40.
[8] *Mbh.*, III. Ch. 58.
[9] *Mat. P.*, 57.92-98. [10] *HV. P.*, III.4.41.
[11] ibid, III.4.42-46. [12] ibid, III.4.47-48.
[13] Bhattacharyya, N.N., *Ancient Indian Rituals and Their Social Contents*, Delhi, 1975, p. 37.

functioning of the socio-cultural value system. There is a latent warning to the leaders of society to keep themselves vigilant of the dark forces of the Kali brand.

The idea of Yugas, giving referential idioms to social behavior, was definitely prone to support the mechanism of social control. This concept of Yuga, in fact, had become a built-in fixture in the minds of the people. The full play of the concept has been prevalent in society. In the Bilsad Stone Pillar inscription of Kumāragupta (415-16 AD), a feudatory is said to be following the path of the customs of Kṛta age.[1] Further, the Alina Copper-Plate Inscription (AD 766-67) of Śīlāditya VII, a king of Valbhi, records his claim of 'destroying all the specious procedure of (this wicked) Kali age.'[2]

10. A Critique of Brāhmaṇas Role

To Sherring, the caste system was 'the most baneful, hard-hearted and cruel social system that could possibly be invented for damning the human race.'[3] According to him its object was 'neither more nor less than to exalt the Brahman, to feed his pride and to minister to his self-will.'[4] Senart says that the Brāhmaṇa legislators obeyed, 'more or less willingly, a personal and selfish tendency, the operation of which is everywhere patent, and finally deprived their work of the authority of a straight-forward document. Before all else their aim was to establish the absolute supremacy of the Brāhmaṇas.'[5] To some it is a phenomenon of the hierarchy of the Brāhmaṇas.[6] The above observations suffer from the defect of extremity and seem to be influenced by the Smṛti literature which is tempered by extra-Brāhmaṇic flavour. These generalised views, if seen against the background of our age, so challenging to the orthodox society, and put to the geographical considerations, fail, in our opinion, to correctly read the situation prevailing during the period of our study.

First, with regard to the proposition of Brāhmaṇic hierarchy, if the term is taken in its standard meaning of 'priestly government,'[7] it has to be rejected forthwith. The Brāhmaṇa-priests never formed any well-organised body of their class to have any undue sway on politics. The 'gotras' and 'pravaras' were educational institutions, while the old Pariṣads, which disintegrated quickly, were corporate bodies of such Brāhmaṇas who had little concern with politics, although they used to interpret law when it was referred to them. There were side by side the

[1]Fleet, *CII*, III, p. 45, see also ibid, pp. 240, 248.
[2]ibid, p. 182.
[3]Sherring, *Hindu Tribes and Castes*, III, p. 293, Stevenson, Mrs Sinclair, *The Rites of the Twice-born*, p. 442.
[4]ibid, p. 274.
[5]Senart, *Caste in India*, pp. 105-6.
[6]Rao, vide *QJAHRS*, July, 1928; October, 1929, IV, Pts. 1-2; 1930, Pts. 3-4; 1931, Pt. 3.
[7]*EBr.*, II, fourteenth edition, p. 544.

Pariṣads of the Kṣatriyas and the Vaiśyas[1] also. The influence of the priests on government was at its height in the later Vedic period, but it suffered seriously at the hands of heterodoxy as well as under the strong pressures of the Upaniṣadic thought-flux. The alliance of the Buddhist movement with political power accentuated the heterodox challenge against priestly dominance, which is marked by the abolition of sacrifices and the priestly offices by Aśoka. The Brāhmaṇas' superior status in society was equally shared by the Śramaṇas, for so often both of them are bracketed together in Aśokan inscriptions. Besides, whatever homogeneity the Brāhmaṇic class got from priestly functions and Vedic studies, it progressively broke up since the Brāhmaṇas 'en mass' were taking up secular professions of all grades. Further, there are indications that Brāhmaṇas, as royal chaplains, were losing the estimation of the ritual circles in contrast to the Brāhmaṇas following the Nivṛtti path or those who were independent of royal patronage and control. Even the later authors hold the royal chaplain only as a priest in the service of the king. In spite of his high claims, the tenure of the chaplain's office was not quite secure before the political power of the king.[2] These considerations apart, the very fact that the scheme of functional divisions of the classes requires a Brāhmaṇa to shun any ambition for political power. Moreover, except for the few Brāhmaṇa-priests, Brāhmaṇas true to their standard duties had too precarious an economic position to exert any undue pressure on the state in general.

But hierarchy, taken as the graded class stratification with the Brāhmaṇa at the top, was obviously existing there. Against antagonistic challenges, Brāhmaṇa authors put forth inflated claims. The Smṛtis, especially that of Manu, are the best example of the same. But hierarchy in the sense of graded class stratifications is different from priestly hierarchy. Senart observes: "The hierarchic division of the population into classes is practically universal, but the caste system is a unique phenomenon. That Brāhmaṇic ambition has taken advantage of it in order to more firmly establish its domination is possible but not obvious. A caste-system is not the necessary basis of a theocracy."[3] But it is to be noted that the measures the Brāhmaṇas took for the consolidation of graded class organisation with their dominance, amounting to hierarchical social stratification, might have lost their strength when the Brāhmaṇa class itself came to form a number of groups divided on the basis of their occupations, resembling roughly the functional classes of varying vocations. It is well said: "In its broader outlines the history of the priesthood reveals a striking tendency towards democratization. Although in the earlier stages of cultural evolution the priest was intimately identified with the chieftain and

[1] *Mahāvagga*, VI.28.4; cf. *Mahāparinibbāna Sutta*, V.24.

[2] *Mbh.*, and *Manu*, vide *supra*, pp. 282f; cf. *AV*, III.5.7; *TSam.*, I.8.9.1; *TBr.*, I.7.3.1; *PBr.*, XIX.1; *Amarakośa*, II.8.1.5.

[3] Senart, op. cit., p. 153.

the king and the priestly office was monopolized by patrician families." . . . . . a "gradual transition to a more democratic organization of the priesthood was accompanied by an increasingly marked tendency to secularism and secularization of function, a tendency which has repeatedly manifested itself in the evolution of religion. The priest, who at the outset was the sole guardian of the written word, was at once jurist, medical authority, mathematician, astronomer, historian, philologist, natural scientist . . . and political theorist. As more and more of these functions came to be taken by specialized lay groups within the community, the prestige of the priestly caste inevitably suffered."[1] This tendency of the Christian priesthood can be equally applied in the case of Indian priests with the reservation that liberal education and learning in ancient India remained in the hands of the Brāhmaṇas. But even before the second century BC the Brāhmaṇas were adopting secular vocations of different grades. Vassakāra and Kauṭilya as statesmen and politicians were in a secular profession. Manu, like Kauṭilya, differentiates between a priest and a Brāhmaṇa minister. The ten-types of Brāhmaṇas in the *Jātakas*,[2] the six-types in the *Mahābhārata*,[3] and ten kinds of them in the *Atri Saṃhitā*[4] put them in utterly different professions, presenting to us the contra-ideal types of Brāhmaṇas, far from priestly functions. The adoption of the secular professions by Brāhmaṇas reduces all possibilities of priestly hierarchy. In fact, after the Upaniṣadic upheaval and heterodox challenges, the priestly sections of the Brāhmaṇas, in spite of the efforts of the law-givers, were not so effective in regaining their lost position as those who had moral influence and followed the Nivṛttidharma, sacrificing worldly temptations, which demanded, apart from other attributes, the negation of all wealth and lust for political power.

Any modern mind will share the sentiments of Sherring, but to say that caste system signified a project aiming 'neither more nor less than to exalt the Brahman, to feed his pride and to minister to his self-will' is to ignore so many factors which led to caste formation. Scholars have found many contributory factors like occupation,[5] race and colour,[6] the Āryan family institution and tradition, especially the marriage system,[7] the natural tendency of following hereditary profession,[8] sacrificial organisation,[9]

[1] *ESS*, XII, p. 394.

[2] vide *supra*, pp. 16-17.

[3] vide *supra*, pp. 121-2.

[4] This work is quite later than our period. Nevertheless, the passage cited shows the tendency of deviation continuing in later times also, vide *supra*, pp. 121-2.

[5] Nesfield, *Brief View of the Caste System of the North-West Province and Oudh*, Allahabad, 1885; Saraswati, B.N., *Brahmanic Ritual Tradition*, p. 24.

[6] Risley, *The People of India*, Calcutta, 1915; vide Chanda, *The Indo-Aryan Races*, 36; Ghurye, *CRI*, pp. 165-83; Majumdar, *Races and Culture of India*, 1961, p. 301.

[7] Senart, *Caste in India*, pp. 175ff.

[8] vide, *Ved. Ind.*, II, n. 6; Muir, *OST*, II, p. 259.

[9] Hocart, *Caste: A Comparative Study*, London, 1950, pp. 17f, 20f, 67-68; cf. Dutt, *OGCI*, pp. 85-86.

idea of purity, taboo, mana[1] derived partly from the Āryan and partly from pre-Āryan inhabitants,[2] as responsible for the formation of caste system.[3] Brāhmaṇas' manipulation[4] of their social superiority is more than obvious but to say that it was for damning the human race is to overlook the operation of historical and cultural forces.[5] The law-givers, as the representative of the orthodox circles, decry some of the tribes and castes. But most of the non-Varṇa tribes and castes were opposed to orthodoxy and led to the cultural tension which bred mutual distrust and condemnation.[6] The Buddhist circles which stood to abolish the caste system only in the Śramaṇic order do not seem to have been wholly successful. The description of the castes in the Buddhist texts not only follows the Brāhmaṇic narrations of castes but also holds the Caṇḍālas, Pukkusas, Niṣādas, and Veṇas as low-born and low castes.[7] A slave could not join the Buddhist order.[8] In fact, in general standards of culture some of the professions were held as low and degraded. Baudhāyana degrades those Brāhmaṇas to the Śūdra level who tend cattle, live by trade, work as artisans, actors, servants or usurers.[9] This low estimation of such avocations is equally shared by the Buddhist circles wherein many low professions (hīnasippāni), are described.[10] We find that while Brāhmaṇas' treatment of the non-Varṇa castes was systematically guided by the Varṇa scheme, the Buddhist accounts give their actual low conditions. In fact, the low estimation of different professions seems to be a natural consequence of the cultural standards which held menial work as low and praised certain qualities and traits as high. The severest attack on the caste system of Vedic orthodoxy, with particular reference to that adumbrated in the *Mānava Dharma Śāstra*, comes from the *Vajrasūcī*, a crisp work of Aśvaghoṣa. His line of attack is based on an argument which held invalid any claim of Brāhmaṇahood on the basis of Vedic study, performance of sacraments, parentage, race (Kula), Karma etc. To him,

[1]Stanley Rice, 'The origin of Caste,' vide *Asiatic Review*, XXV, 1929, pp. 147ff, 331ff; Bonnerjea, 'Possible Origin of the Caste System in India,' vide *IA*, LX, 1931, pp. 49-52, 67-70, 91-95.

[2]Oldenberg, 'Zur Geschichte des Indischen Kastenwesens' in *ZDMG*, LI, Pt. 2, 1897, pp. 267ff; vide *IA*, XLIX, 1920, pp. 213-14 fn. and pp. 224ff; Muir, *OST*, I, pp. 239ff, Zimmer, *Altindischen leben*, pp. 185ff; *Asiatic Review*, XXV, p. 150; Murphy, *Lamps of Anthropology*, Manchester, 1943, pp. 120-27; Ketkar, *The History of Caste*, pp. 121ff; Basham, *The Wonder That was India*, 1954, p. 18.

[3]Ibbetson, *Panjab Castes*, Lahore, 1916, pp. 1-25ff; vide, Senart, op. cit., p. 162.

[4]Macdonell, *HSL*, p. 184; Max Müller, *HSL*, pp. 11-12, 76-78; Weber, *HIL*, pp. 18-19; Baines, *Ethnography*, pp. 16-17; Hutton, *Caste in India*, p. 175.

[5]Ghose, *Indo-Aryan Literature and Culture*, London, pp. 151-53.

[6]Ambedkar, *The Untouchables*, New Delhi, 1948, pp. 74-76; cf. Ghurye, op. cit., p. 11.

[7]*Maj. Nik.*, III, pp. 169-78; II, 152, 183-84.

[8]*Dig. Nik.*, I.5.

[9]*BDS*, I.5.10.24; *VDS*, III.3; II.27; *Manu*, III.63-65; III.150-66; *Yāj.*, I.270-94; I.222-24; *Viṣ. Sm.*, 82.8-9; 82.26, 21-22; 23, 29; *Mbh.*, XIII.90.4-4.

[10]*Vin. P.*, IV.6-7, p. 439; *SBE*, XI.175; *Dig. Nik.*, III.95.

Brāhmaṇahood constitutes 'merely an immaculate quality, like the snowy whiteness of the Kunda flower. That which removes sin is Brāhmaṇahood. It consists of Vrata and Tapa, and Niyama, and Upavāsa, and Dāna, and 'Śama' and Sanyama,' etc. . . . which are open to all. But while enumerating these qualities he says that these are contrasted by the vices of a Caṇḍāla.[1] It is to be noted that while the revolutionary reasoning of Aśvaghoṣa does not accept caste by birth, the attributes of Brāhmaṇahood remain the same as in Smṛti literature and, they are contrasted with certain occupations and traits which are declared as low. This criterion of value judgement on varying vocations must have created certain degree of cultural tensions between different communities.

Brāhmaṇas, social systematization was directed not only to maintain the framework of the Varṇas but also to consolidate it. It is said that "Brahminism did not abolish caste in order to gain popular support, as it would have meant the surrender of the privileged position of the Brahmins without which there would have been no sense in preserving Brahmanism."[2] This explanation of the Brāhmaṇas' championship of the Varṇa system seems to over-simplify the problem. The Brāhmaṇas' social role could hardly have been divorced from the support of the people and the society for whom or amidst whom they were laying down their laws. Individuals or a class can play a role only up to the status they enjoy in the society. In turn, their status itself is determined only on the basis of the roles they play in relation to other social groups. A role is explained as 'a pattern of expected behaviour associated with a certain position in a society," accordingly, "Social roles carry a whole complex pattern of expectations."[3] Further, 'roles carry the idea of 'reciprocity'. That is, they not only comprise the expected behaviour of an individual in a situation, but also the behaviour of others towards him.'[4] In this aspect, a role is defined as . . . . "an internally consistent series of conditioned responses by one member of a social situation which represents the stimulus pattern for a similarly internally consistent series of conditioned responses of the other(s) in that situation."[5] In view of this theoretical proposition, it can be said that the nature of the Brāhmaṇas' role depended on their status which the society actually granted them and not on theoretical supremacy they claimed for themselves. Brāhmaṇic laws, to the extent they were based on actual practices, had traditional sanction, and, to the extent they were not based on practice, their application was conditioned by the co-operation and support of the classes and castes for whom they

[1]Vajrasūcī of Aśvaghoṣa vide Johh Wilson, *Indian Caste*, I (What is Caste), Times of India, Bombay, 1877, p. 300; and see also pp. 295-308.

[2]Thomas, *The Story of the Cultural Empire of India*, Erankulam, Kerala, p. 151.

[3]Francis E. Merrill, *Society and Cultural*, New Jersey, 1963, p. 172.

[4]Francis E. Merrill, op. cit., p. 173.

[5]Leonard S. Cottrell, Jr., "The Adjustment of the Individual to His Age and Sex Roles," *American Sociological Review*, p. 7: 617-620, October, 1942, p. 617, vide Merrill, *Society and Culture*, p. 173.

were meant. It is rightly said that the Brāhmaṇas as 'religious and moral legislators obeyed a natural inclination which is very powerful in the Hindu mind.'[1] The opinion that 'political supremacy of the higher social groups helped to maintain such monopolistic (i.e., monopoly of learned professions and occupations) social attitude"[2] is supported by Brāhmaṇas' attempts to get royal protection to the Varṇadharma.[3] No body today can entertain the idea of social division on the basis of birth and the dominance of a class or a group of classes enjoying special privileges. A rational justification of such system is impossible. But all societies of the past 'perpetrated and perpetuated social injustices without meeting any significant resistance from those who were victimised by the social system.'[4]

[1]Senart, *Caste in India*, p. 105.

[2]Majumdar, *Races and Cultures of India*, p. 302.

[3]Max Weber, *Essays in Sociology*, New York, 1953, p. 404.

[4]Niebuhr, *Moral Man and Immoral Society*, New York, pp. 128-29, 142, vide Kangle, *Kauṭilīya Arthaśāstra*, pp. 145-46.

Chapter 7

SYSTEMATIZATION OF THE ĀŚRAMAS

1. Introduction

The orthodox view of life aims at the attainment of 'tri-varga,' *i.e.*, Dharma, Artha and Kāma here in this life and the final liberation (*mokṣā*) after death to be realised through proper fulfilment of the required obligations and performance of Saṃskāras in successive stages of the four āśramas. The systematization of the āśramic plan, however, was undertaken by the Brāhmaṇas, only after the protracted tension between orthodox Vedism and heterodoxy, and seems to have been brought about as a result of the cultural interaction and synthesis of their opposite pulls.

The ascetic heterodoxy or the Śramaṇic culture, as something quite different from Vedic orthodoxy, had existed long before the Buddhist upsurge.[1] The division of life into āśramic stages in a loose form is traced even in the Ṛgvedic times.[2] The Upaniṣads, in giving a developed form[3] of the same, represent a significant cultural synthesis of Vedism and the ascetic trend. But, even in the Dharmaśāstras, the mention of these āśramas neither conforms in point of number, nor sequence and nomenclature. The terms applied to indicate the fourth stage of life show variations, e.g., Parivrājaka (Parivrāṭ). Bhikṣu, Muni, Yati, and Vaikhānasa.[4] This would have us believe that initially there were diverse traditions, and ascetic trends.

2. Early Marks of Tension

We have noticed that the ascetic trend was basically opposed to the Vedic view of life. Of the various ascetic orders and schools, the Buddhist movement gave the biggest jolt to the Vedic institution of family. The doctrine of Nirvāṇa, based on the consciousness of the miseries of worldly

[1] Pande, *SOB*, 1957, p. 261.

[2] Kane, *HDŚ*, II, Pt. I, pp. 268, 418-19; see also B.N. Saraswati, *Brahmanic Ritual Tradition*, p. 82ff.

[3] *Ch. Up.*, II.23.1; *Br. Up.*, III.5.1; IV.5.2; *Māṇḍu. Up.*, I.2.11.

[4] *ĀDS*, II.9.21.1; *GDS*, III.2; *VDS*, VII.1-2; cf. *Manu*, VI.87.

life and the bondage of social responsibilities, could not but encourage escapism and renunciation. The Buddha, while instructing Nāgabhaṭṭa, is presented to be against attaching one's self to the miseries of family life.[1] It is laid down that man should go away from the world leaving his house, and a 'bhikṣu' should never recant his faith in asceticism by returning to family life.[2] It is declared that one is released from the kingdom of death by means of his wandering life in the forest.[3] The championship of asceticism would naturally give a low status to the lay man. The Buddha says that monkish happiness is greater than the life of a lay devotee who could not take part in the Saṅgha.[4] In fact, early Jainism and Buddhism do not recognise any other stage of life except that of the Śramaṇa or the ascetic.[5]

On the other hand, the orthodox view of life was not only opposed to this trend but our authors seem to have distrusted the ascetics and held them as heretics. Even Kauṭilya calls them Vṛṣalas and Pāṣaṇḍas.[6] He does not allow the ascetics to enter the country-side.[7] Manu says that the heretics (Pāṣaṇḍas), who, according to the commentator Nārada, signify the Buddhists and so forth,[8] should be immediately banished from the country for they are as bad as thieves.[9] His argument for their banishment is remarkable. He maintains that if such secret thieves dwell in the realm of a king, they, by their forbidden practices (Vikarmakriyā),[10] constantly harass his good people (Bhadrikāḥ Prajāḥ). It is not unlikely that Manu indicates here their proselytizing activities. Men or women who join the anti-orthodox heretic orders giving up their lawful duties are deprived of Vedic rites. Women joining the heretic orders are equated with those who kill their husbands.[11] Kauṭilya imposes heavy fines on those who invite the monks of heretical orders (Vṛṣalapravrajitān), such as Śākyas (Buddhists) and Ājīvikas, to dinners offered in honour of the deities and the manes.[12] Manu enjoins upon a Brāhmaṇa student that he should not honour, even by greetings, the men of the heretic sects, like the Buddhists and the Jainas, those who follow forbidden occupations and the logicians who argue against the Vedic faith.[13] In fact, Manu denounces

[1] *Saṃ. Nik.*, IV, pp. 300f.
[2] ibid, pp. 90-91.
[3] *Saṃ. Nik.*, I, p. 6; *Khudd. Nik.*, ed. Kashyap, p. 329; cf. *Sut. Nip.*, vide *SBE*, X, Pt. II, Vass. 404-5, p. 66; *Saṃ. Nik.*, Pt. 1.2.9, p. 8; III.1.1, p. 69.
[4] *Aṅg. Nik.*, I, p. 49 and p. 80.
[5] vide Gokhale, *Buddhism and Aśoka*, p. 27.
[6] It is to be noted that the term 'paṣaṇḍa' is frequently used in the inscriptions of Aśoka to denote heterodox sects but it does not seem to have any derogatory meaning.
[7] *KArth.*, II.1.40.
[8] *SBE*, XXV, p. 184fn.
[9] *Manu*, IX.225.
[10] ibid, IX.226.
[11] ibid, V.90.
[12] *KArth.*, III.20.16-20.
[13] *Manu*, IV.30-31.

outright the non-Vedic doctrines and religious systems. He says "all those traditions and all those despicable systems of philosophy, which are not based on the Veda, produce no reward after death; for they are declared to be founded on Darkness. All those doctrines which differ from the Vedas perish soon, are worthless and false, because they are of modern date."[1] Medhātithi explains that false traditions mean such rules as 'heavenly bliss is attained by worshipping caityas, which occur in the Sobha and other Siddhāntas of the Nirgranthas (Digaṃbara Jainas)."[2]

The tension between the two trends was bound to become acute, for the Vedic tradition emphasised the householders' way of life as the nucleus of culture in opposition to the heterodox exaltation of the ascetic order. According to Vedic orthodoxy, a man is born with certain debts of socio-religious import.[3] Brāhmaṇas' championship of the world-affirming view is recorded in the Buddhist literature too. Subha reported to the Buddha that the Brāhmaṇas say that only a householder is the worshipper of a just religion and not an ascetic,[4] as the former is full of great purpose and great deed in contrast to the latter who is of lesser purpose and deed.[5] It confirms the hostile view that the Brāhmaṇa authors had of the ascetic trend. Baudhāyana condemns the heterodox doctrines of un-Vedic Ācāryas. Referring to the authority of some teacher he declares about the Āśramic life that 'there was an asura, Kapila by name, the son of Prahlāda striving with the gods, he made these divisions. A wise man should not take heed of them."[6]

3. Synthesis

In spite of this deep-rooted tension, these opposing traditions interacted on each other and cultural transformation began on an intellectual level. The Vedic sacerdotalism preached that heavenly bliss and godly abode are gained through the performance of sacrifices. Gradually, however, new doctrines began to emerge, the most important ones being that the individual soul is connected with the Universal Soul, the impermanent worldly existence is an emptiness, Karma and rebirth are interwoven[7] and that the supreme goal is that of liberation of the human soul—ideas fully crystallized by the time of the Upaniṣads.[8] These ideas had their stamp on various new sectarian movements and they had a great, rather revolutionary, impact on orthodoxy. It is observed that "within the religion of

[1]ibid, XII.95-96.
[2]*SBE*, XXV, p. 505fn.
[3]*Mbh.*, BE. XII.295.37; XI.11.19; Crit. Edition XII.284.36-39.
[4]*Maj. Nik.*, II, ed. Kashyap, p. 469; vide also pp. 469ff.
[5]ibid, p. 199.
[6]*BDS*, II. 6.11.28-30.
[7]vide *supra*, pp. 11-12 and 172-3.
[8]*Br. Up.*, IV.13.15; *Kaṭha Up.*, vide *ERE*, 8, p. 771; cf. *AIU*, p. 371.

the Brāhmaṇas there was a growing cleavage of ideas about the fundamental values of life, which resulted in the adoption of Mokṣa as the 'summum bonum' in addition to the trivarga, i.e., Dharma, Artha and Kāma and the Vedic religion became truly a synthesis of Pravṛtti Dharma and Nivṛtti Dharma."[1] This synthesis of ritualistic and ascetic values is pitched[2] high in the composite character of thought presented in the *Bhagavadgītā* and the *Mahābhārata*. Manu decries the tendency of putting exclusive emphasis on any single puruṣārtha and declares that the ultimate good consists in the aggregate of the three, i.e., Dharma, Artha, and Kāma.[3] Kullūka commenting on this passage says that the final goal of all mortals is liberation (*mokṣa*) which alone would save him.[4] The acceptance of this ultimate goal of life, however, surely meant the integration of the ascetic order in the orthodox fold.

Despite the irregular enumeration of āśramas and discrepancy in their nomenclature, particularly in regard to the fourth stage of life, the authors of the Dharmaśāstras fully developed the four Āśrama theory. By the time of Kauṭilya the āśramic plan of life seems to have been completely systematized and duly connected with the Varṇa system.[5] An individual's life, traditionally accepted as of a hundred years, is now evenly divided into four stages, each lasting for twenty-five years of age.[6] The Purāṇas declare that the āśrama system was a divinely created institution in order that an individual could fulfil his duties properly.[7]

4. Primacy of the Gṛhastha Āśrama Established

In spite of the acceptance and incorporation of the world-negating view of life and institutionalization of the ascetic order in the fourth stage of the orthodox scheme of life, the orthodox Brāhmaṇa authors maintain the primacy of the Gṛhastha āśrama in uncompromising terms. Āpastamba and Kauṭilya, while enumerating the āśramas, place the Gṛhastha āśrama first.[8] The Brāhmaṇic views on the householder's stage of life indicate a keen desire to take firm measures to put the world-negating ascetics in their proper places. Gautama says that out of the four stages of life the Gṛhastha āśrama is alone the source of the other three which are unproductive in their turn.[9] Vasiṣṭha asserts that it is only the householder who performs sacrifices and practises austerities. Therefore this order is the

[1]Pande, *SOB*, p. 317.

[2]vide Grierson, *IA*, XXXVII, pp. 255, 262; cf. Bhandarkar, *Collected Works*, IV, pp. 3, 10; Belvalkar and Ranade, *History of Indian Philosophy*, II, The Creative Period, pp. 443ff.

[3]Manu, II.224; cf. II.230.

[4]see Kullūka on *Manu*, II.224.

[5]*KArth.*, I.3.17.

[6]*Mbh.*, XIII. ch. 107; XII.234.15-16; XIII.230.10ff; *Raghu.*, I.8.

[7]*Vāyu P.*, 8.170-171; *Bd. P.*, 2.7.170-71.

[8]*ĀDS*, II.9.21.1; *KArth.*, I.3.

[9]*GDS*, III.3 ; cf. *ĀDS*, II.9.23.3.

most distinguished of the four; because, as all the great and small rivers find their resting place in the ocean, men of all kinds find protection with the householders.[1] Manu also eulogises this āśrama and says that 'as all living creatures subsist by receiving support from air, even so the members of all orders subsist by receiving support from the householder . . . of gifts, of sacred knowledge and food, therefore, this order is the most excellent one.[2] Medhātithi on Manu (III 78) makes a significant comment that householders alone are, as a rule, to be the teachers of the Veḍas, not hermits or ascetics, as prescribed by the Institutes of the Bhikshus. Nārada and Nanda support this interpretation.[3] A Brāhmaṇa observing his daily duties and Vedic sacrifices in this āśrama obtains Brahmaloka.[4] The life of a householder alone is contained with both heaven and pleasure.[5] These passages require no comment as they speak themselves of the robust pragmatism of the social law-givers in their approach to the socio-religious problems of the time. They point to the counter measures directed against the ascetic trends of heterodoxy.

The *Mahābhārata* is replete with arguments in favour of the Gṛhastha āśrama. Yudhiṣṭhira was persuaded by his brothers, wife, and Vedavyāsa not to embrace Saṃnyāsa as it would yield little merit. According to Bhīma, escape from action (Karma) does not bring perfection.[6] More than that, he makes a conscious attack on Saṃnyāsa when he says: "(Saṃnyāsa) has been started by (men who are) devoid of fortune, (and) paupers and atheists, (and it is represented by them) as the teaching of the Vedas, (while as, in reality, it is) a falsehood looking like truth."[7] Arjuna in order to emphasize the importance of Gṛhastha āśrama cites a traditional story that in olden times some Brāhmaṇas had entered Saṃnyāsa from Brahmacarya. Indra denouncing their conduct made them return to the Gṛhastha āśrama.[8] The Sage Vyāsa holds that the three puruṣārthas exist only in this āśrama which leads towards liberation.[9] At another place, maintaining the orthodox view, it is said that asceticism is to be followed only after leading the life of a householder, upon which depends everything.[10] The Sage Kapila is presented as condemning the view that '*mokṣa*' is not attainable in the householder's way of life.[11] In the *Rāmāyaṇa*, Bharata expresses the view that of all the āṣramas the Gṛhastha one is the most superior.[12] The Purāṇas also extol this āśrama as the origin of the

[1] *VDS*, VIII.14-15; *Manu*, VI.90.
[2] *Manu*, III.77-78.
[3] *SBE*, XXV, p. 89fn.
[4] *VDS*, VIII.17; X.31.
[5] *Mbh.*, XII.12.12.
[6] ibid, XII.10.11ff.
[7] ibid, XII.10.20. Eng. Tr. vide *PO*, III, no. 4 (1939), p. 17.
[8] *Mbh*, XII.11.1ff.
[9] ibid, XII.184.20.
[10] ibid, XII.11.21.
[11] ibid, XII.262.8-12.
[12] *Rāmāy.*, II.106.22.

other three āśramas and also that this stage of life holds the society together through the performance of all social obligations.[1] It seems that the Brāhmaṇas, particularly of the ritual circles, never thought of the ascetic way of life as productive, from the social point of view. While institutionalizing it, they, carefully emphasised the Gṛhastha āśrama as productive of not only the material subsistence but also the means to final deliverance, the 'summum bonum' of asceticism. Winternitz traces the etymological con-notation of the word 'āśrama' to signify 'the religious exertion' on the part of Śramaṇas, ascetics and forest-dwelling hermits and observes that "the Brāhmaṇas named even a life of a householder as āśrama so, through this designation, they placed it (the householder's life) in one line with the life and all sorts of religious penances of ascetics."[2]

Before quitting the family for an ascetic life, one was required to reach an old age by which he should have discharged all Gṛhastha obligations. He must have made provisions of subsistence to his dependents, otherwise he was liable to punishment.[3] Kauṭilya allows Saṃnyāsa only in old age and that too after due permission of the authority concerned.[4] The act of inducing a woman to renunciation was liable to be punished by a fine.[5]

Socio-Religious Obligations of the Gṛhastha Āśrama

The Brāhmaṇa social thinkers have assertively prescribed for a householder the fulfilment of various social, religious, and economic obligations. The Gṛhastha āśrama represents the very pulse of the orthodox culture and the mainstay of other three orders.[6] This stage of life was meant to earnestly perform the five great sacrifices, so that one may not lose this world and the next.[7] The origin of the five great sacrifices belonged to the Vedic religious tradition, and were developed in the Smṛtis and the Epics directly from the Saṃhitā, the Brāhmaṇa[8] and the Āraṇyaka[9] literature. In the earlier texts these Yajñas signify devotion, gratitude, reverence, loving memory, kindness and toleration leading towards the general weal of the society.[10] But the authors of our age, like Manu, transformed the conception of the Pañcamahāyajñas as a means of expiation of sins committed in the daily life of a householder, e.g., the killing of

[1] *Vāyu P.*, 8.127; cf. *Viṣ. P.*, III.9.11; *Bd. P.*, II.7.172-73; *Raghu.*, V.10; vide also Prabhu, *HSO*, p. 95.

[2] Winternitz, 'Zur Lehre Von den Āśramas' pub. in *Beitrage Zur Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte Indiens*, Fest-gabe Jacobi Zum 75, Geburtstag, Bonn, 1926, vide *PO*, III, no. 4, 1939, p. 14fn.

[3] *Manu*, VI.1-2; *KArth.*, II.1.33.

[4] *KArth.*, II.1.

[5] ibid, II.1.36-37.

[6] *Manu*, III.78.

[7] *Mbh.*, BE. IX.54.13; cf. *Mbh.*, Critical Edition, XII.76.24; *Rāmāy.*, I.54.13.

[8] *ŚBr.*, I.7.3.11.

[9] *TĀr.*, II.10.

[10] *ŚBr.*, XI.5.6.1; II.5.6.1.

insects.[1] It may be noted here that Manu ingeniously accepts the doctrine of non-violence of the heterodox sects. In these sacrifices he prescribes the muttering of Vedic hymns in place of oblations to the fire.[2] These sacrifices consist of pre-natal debts to the gods, manes, Brāhmaṇa-ṛṣis, the guests and the bhūtas (the small creatures).[3] The fulfilment of these obligations meant the implementation of the doctrine of action, in contrast to the philosophy of inaction or escapism associated with the ascetic tradition. Besides, it is noteworthy that these Yajñas in no way represented any philosophy of total surrender to gods as enjoined in the Bhakti theology; rather, they represent the evolution of the Vedic way of life based on the world-affirming philosophy of action.

Manu states that the sages, the manes, the gods, the Bhūtas, and guests ask the householders for offerings and gifts; hence he who knows the law must give what is due to each.[4] Explaining as to what constitute these pre-natal debts, Manu exhorts him to worship, according to the rules, the sages, by private recitation of the Veda, the gods by burnt oblations, the manes by funeral offerings (Śrāddha), men (guests) by gifts of food, and the Bhūtas (the creatures) by the Bali offerings.[5] The householder has to feed only one Brāhmaṇa in honour of the manes at the Śrāddha.[6] It is to be noted that the debts to the ancestors were to be fulfilled in two ways, i.e., procreation of heirs and the performance of Śrāddha and Tarpaṇa.[7] These socio-religious obligations were popularized through the Purāṇic literature also.[8] Besides, another sacrifice known as Vaiṣvānara Yajña, i.e., offerings to the recluses and the students,[9] was added. Thus, these Yajñas were fairly representative of the cultural responsibilities of the Vedic society.

The epics[10] and the Purāṇas[11] furnish us with numerous examples of how the princes and the people alike performed these sacrifices in actual day-to-day life. They may at best represent an old tradition, continuing to the age of their last redactions well into our own period. It is no wonder, however, that the Smṛtis emphasize that tradition and, in recording the various household sacrifices, they seem to portray the realities of the age. Further, kings have made land grants to support the Brāhmaṇas in the

[1] *Manu*, III.71; cf. *GDS*, V.8ff; *BDS*, II.6.1-8.
[2] *Manu*, III.73-74.
[3] *Manu*, XII.11.19.
[4] *Manu*, III.80; cf. *Vis. Sm.*, 59.29-30.
[5] *Manu*, III.81; cf. ibid, III.82; *Yāj.*, I.104, 101ff.
[6] *Manu*, III.83.
[7] *Mbh.*, III.80.13-15; XII.24.23ff; *Rāmāy.*, VII.37.13-15.
[8] *Vis. P.*, III.9.9-10; cf. *Vāyu P.*, 8.181; cf. *Mat. P.*, 52.14.
[9] *Mbh.*, XIII.23.23; XIII.37.17 with Nīlakaṇṭha's Commentary.
[10] *Rāmāy.*, I.6.12-12; II.102.30; II.46.13; II.49.2; II.32.4ff; II. Chs. 25,23,28; VII.37.13; VIII.36.71; see also *Mbh.*, XII.78.8ff; III.27.5; III.277.28; BE. I.85.2-4; Crit. E. XII.88.8; BE. XVII.1.11; BE. XII.33.7.29-30; BE. XI.24.6-7; BE. XI.27.1-4; III.184.18-20; cf. *Saundarānanda*, I.44.
[11] *Viṣ. P.*, III.9.15; *Vāyu P.*, 8.181; *Bḍ. P.*, II.7.174; *Mat. P.*, 40.3.

performance of these sacrifices.[1] It is on account of important obligations fulfilled in the Gṛhastha āśrama that it is accepted as the field of 'Karma-yoga,'[2] which is a means to 'Jñānayoga.'[3] The fulfilment of household responsibilities is in itself a great 'Sādhanā', through which the house-holder achieves the merits of asceticism.[4]

5. The Vānaprastha Āśrama

The Vānaprastha or forest-dwelling stage of life is the third in the Hindu scheme of the Āśramas. While entering it one has to give up attachment to the family, home and even village.[5] He has to control his senses, observe celibacy, and acclimatize himself to the hard life of the forest, depending on wild fruits[6] for his subsistence. He is required to continue the performance of the five great sacrifices, as in the Gṛhastha life, in a proper manner using the jungle-fruits for the purpose.[7] Whatever he collects has to be offered in sacrifices and to the visiting guests.[8] He has to have a compassionate attitude towards all creatures.[9] The study of the Upaniṣads and the Śrutis and performance of 'tapas' for purifying the body, which will elevate his soul to a higher level,[10] are also prescribed to him. The observance of these practices would assure him the abode of Brahma, i.e., liberation.[11]

Thus we find that the law-givers tried to bring about a strange 'rapprochement' between the orthodox duty of performing the five great sacrifices and spiritual attainment through renunciation, peculiar to the ascetic tradition. In their fervent assertion of Vedism they introduced the sacrificial cult in the Vānaprastha āśrama also, which was meant for spiritual pursuits. This new legislation is indicated by the provision which requires the man embracing Vānaprastha to take up new fire of Śramaṇic rules, giving up the Śrauta and Gṛhya fire.[12] Manu, however, clearly enjoins upon him to perform Śrauta sacrifices of new moon and full moon and other seasonal sacrifices.[13]

That a wave of asceticism was in full flow is evidenced by differuət kinds of the Vānaprastha recluse, distinguished on the basis of different

[1] *EI*, VI, p. 294; XV.113; vide *Infra*, pp. 218-9.
[2] *Mat. P.*, 258.1ff.
[3] ibid, 52.11.
[4] *Vāyu P.*, 59.23.
[5] *Manu*, VI.4; *Yāj.*, III.45: cf. *GDS*, III.11ff.
[6] *Manu*, VI.14, 16, 6, 26; *Yāj.*, III.46, 51, 54.
[7] *Manu*, VI.5.
[8] ibid, V1.7.
[9] ibid, VI.8; *Yāj.*, III.48.
[10] *Manu*, VI.29-30.
[11] ibid, VI.32 with Kullūka's Commentary.
[12] *GDS*, III.27; *ĀDS*, II.9.21.21; *VDS*, IX.10.
[13] *Manu*, VI.9-10; *Yāj.*, III.45.

philosophical schools, doctrines, food-habits, and ways of austerities.[1] The elaborate rules for this āśrama seem to mark its increasing popularity.[2]

Vānaprastha in Relation to the Varṇa System

Our sources indicate that caste-barriers were imposed on this āśrama in our period, unlike earlier times. The *Mahābhārata* and Manu allow only the three upper classes to embrace Vānaprasthahood.[3] That the Śūdras were denied entry to this āśrama is illustrated by Rāma's punishment to the Śūdra Śambūka for his venture to practise penance.[4] But the *Mahābhārata* provides that he can enter it after the permission of the king.[5] This barrier imposed on the Śūdras seems to be a counter measure against the Buddhist move to open the doors of asceticism and the Buddhist order to all and sundry. It was also a check on the Śūdras' attempts at the usurpation of the religious acts of the higher orders, as marked in the Kali descriptions.[6]

The rules interdicting the entrance of the Śūdras to Vānaprastha or Saṃnyāsa could hardly have been universally followed, for instances of the ascetics belonging to the fourth order are not lacking. What appears to be the plausible intention of the authors could have amounted to discouraging them from taking up ascetism 'en mass' as a matter of right—a phenomenon which may have been unfavourable to the activity of production and other social transactions. There is no want of instances which express the anxiety of the authors to this effect. Even the Buddha had to deny admission in the Saṅgha to some category of people from lower orders.

We come across in the *Mahābhārata* numerous cases of Brāhmaṇa Vānaprasthas. The Brāhmaṇa forest dwellers, known as Jaṭilas, performed austerities, penance and ritual,[7] tended fire, and practised sacrifices.[8] They formed at times large groups and had group leaders, known as Aggika Jaṭilaha.[9] This type of ascetics is said to have believed in action (Karma) and was described as Kriyāvādin or Karmavādin.[10] This group resembles the Vānaprastha āśramites.[11] Kṣatriyas, especially the princes, are said to have been taking up this āśrama towards the end of their lives.[12] The members of the Vaiśya class also joined the Vānaprastha āśrama. Śravaṇa's father, who was Vaiśya by caste,[13] led a Vānaprastha life.[14]

[1]*BDS*, III.3; *Bṛhat Parāśara*, Ch. XI, p. 290.
[2]*Mbh.*, XII.236.27; XII. Ch. 236; XII.65.1-6; XIV.46.7-16 etc.
[3]*Mbh.*, XIV.35.32(b); *Manu*, VI.1.
[4]*Rāmāy.*, VII.76.1ff.
[5]*Mbh.*, XII.63.12-13.
[6]vide *supra*, pp. 27-8.
[7]vide Kane, *HDŚ*, II, Pt. II, pp. 938-39.
[8]*Vin. P.* I.24-31.
[9]ibid, See also Malalasekera, *Dictionary of Pali Proper Names*, I, pp. 11f. and 931.
[10]ibid.
[11]*VDS*, IX.1; cf. *Uttarājjhāyana*, V.21.
[12]*Mbh.*, BE. XV.4.5.
[13]*Rāmāy.*, II.6.3. and Ch. 64. [14]ibid, II.63-51.

6. The Saṃnyāsa Āśrama

The order of Saṃnyāsa was institutionalized by the Brāhmaṇa law-givers within the āśramic scheme of life, with due restrictions and adjustments to make it suitable and acceptable to the Vedic tradition There had been a rich tradition of āśramic life in the Vedic fold itself. The esteemed ṛṣis often led an āśramic life of retirement in the forests. The non-orthodox Munis and Yatis were later recognised as the Vedic sages in the Vedic literature itself. But they did not launch any movement pleading for renunciation, breaking familial bonds, as was generally the case with heterodoxy from the sixth century BC onwards. The tradition of renunciation had put its gripe on society by the time of Upaniṣads. The world-affirming view of the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*, 'do not break the thread of progeny,'[1] is controverted by the world-negating thought-current which says: "The wise of old did not desire for progeny. For, they thought, 'what shall we do with children? To us the entire world is our own self.' So they gave up the desire for sons, for riches and for worlds, and wandered about begging."[2]

This world-negating tradition crystallized itself into a stage of life distinct from the students' life and the Gṛhastha order. But the institutionalization of Saṃnyāsa āśrama was comparatively a new phenomenon. In the earlier Upaniṣads the difference between the Vānaprastha and Saṃnyāsa āśramas is not well established.[3] The institutionalization of the fourth stage of life seems to have been evolved on account of the increasing pressure of heterodoxy on the Vedic fold, which led to the tendency of embracing the ascetic orders even by the members of the orthodox society. It is to be noted, however, that different circles amongst the Brāhmaṇas reacted differently to the ascetic trends. The strong emphasis on the Gṛhastha āśrama accorded by the authors of the Sūtras, Epics, Smṛtis and Kauṭilya is challenged by those who imbibed the ascetic tradition. The *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* declares that Saṃnyāsa is above all the āśramas and supreme of all the orders.[4] The conservative section allows this order only to the Brāhmaṇas.[5] The lenient ones extend this āśrama to the members of the twice-born classes after their completion of the Vedic Study.[6] But ultimately the views of the conservative section seem to have prevailed.[7] In the *Mahābhārata*, the Brāhmaṇas are described as possessed of various attributes of asceticism.[8] It is noteworthy that the *Vaikhānasa-Dharma-Praśna* says that the Brāhmaṇa alone passes through all the four stages;

[1] *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*, I.11.1.
[2] *Bṛ. Up.*, IV.4.22.
[3] *PO*, III no. 4, pp. 15-16; *Manu*, II.234; cf. Prabhu, *HSO*, 1963, p. 84 and fn.
[4] *Śvet. Up.*, VI.29.
[5] *Muṇḍ. Up.*, I.2.12; *Manu*, V.1-38; VI.38; VI.97; *Laghu Viṣṇu*, V.13.
[6] *Jābālopaniṣad*, 4; *Mit.* on *Yāj.*, I.56-57.
[7] Kane, op. cit., II, Pt. II, pp. 924-26.
[8] *Mbh.*, XII.225.8-25.

the Kṣatriya only the first three; the Vaiśya the first two; and the Śūdras lead householders' life in general.[1] The Buddhist Ācārya, Aśvaghoṣa, gives a detailed description of the various forms of austerities practised by Brāhmaṇa ascetics living in forests.[2] He informs that the Brahmavādins among the Brāhmaṇas observed lifelong celibacy.[3] There is a mention of one such Brāhmaṇa ascetic who subsisted on roots only.[4]

Regarding the time of entering this āśrama, earlier authors evince some laxity. Baudhāyana refers to the views of some Ācāryas, who opine that after the completion of studentship one can directly join the ascetic order.[5] Manu strictly forbids it and prescribes that one has to pass through all the stages in their proper sequence.[6] In later times there emerged the extreme view that Vānaprasthahood and Saṃnyāsahood are not to be followed in the dark age of Kali.[7]

We find that the authors of our age betray a general tendency to discourage saṃnyāsahood to all the classes other than the Brāhmaṇas. It is not unlikely that the increasing popularity of the ascetic order had assumed the form of a positive challenge to orthodoxy which they had to face. They wanted to contain this current in a twofold manner. The first was a compromise in which they incorporated Saṃnyāsa as the fourth stage of life and secondly, restricting admission to this āśrama to the greatest possible extent. Most of the qualities typical of a Saṃnyāsī resembled closely the attributes of a Nivṛttimārgī Brāhmaṇa. With the result that Saṃnyāsa fitted in with their traits and they accepted it willingly. Ascetics were divided in many classes.[8] The most marked division was between the orthodox and the heterodox ascetics which *Kalpasūtra* (1.9) describes as "Brambhaṇṇyesu" and Paribhāyayesu "nayesu." And "the Brāhmaṇas' attitude was not so uncompromising towards the secular life; it envisaged renunciation only after the proper fulfilment of social duties."[9] These factors might have been responsible for restricting other classes to join this order. But the number of even the Brāhmaṇa saṃnyāsīs must have been limited if the proper age of the accepting of saṃnyāsa were followed, which was beyond seventy.[10]

As far as women are concerned, we find that Buddhism opened the ascetic order to them also. The case within the Vedic fold, however, was

[1] *Vaikh. Dh. Pr*, cited in Chakladar, *Social Life in Ancient India*, p. 83.
[2] *Buddhacarita*, VII.15ff.
[3] ibid, VII.15ff.
[4] *Avadāna. Śat.*, II, p. 125.
[5] *BDS*, II.10.17.2-5; *GDS*, III.1.
[6] *Manu*, IV.1; VI, I, 33-37; 87-88; cf. *Viṣ. Sm.*, Chs. 96-97; *Yāj*. III.56-65.
[7] Kane, *HDŚ*, II, Pt. II, p. 929 and fn.
[8] Rhys Davids, *Buddhist India*, pp. 144-46; *Jaina Sūtras*, I, p. 128fn. I; Law, *India as Described in Early Texts of Buddhism and Jainism*, pp. 229-30.
[9] Pande, *SOB*, p. 328.
[10] *BDS*, II.10.3-6; *Vaikh. Dh. Pr.*, II.6; *Viṣ. Sm.*, 96.1; cf. *Manu*, VI.138; *Yāj*. III.56; *Mbh.*, XII. Ch. 236.

different. Asceticism for women was discouraged and we get only stray references to women ascetics. Patañjali mentions a woman ascetic (*Parivrājikā*) named Śaṅkarā.[1] The Smṛtis also mention a few parivrājikās.[2] In the *Mahābhārata* they are held as capable of practising Yoga and pursuing learning.[3] The reference to female ascetics in Manu (VIII.363), however, is taken by the commentators Govindarāja, Kullūka and Rāghavānanda to be that of Buddhist nuns. The *Mitākṣarā* on Yājñavalkya (III.58) shows that some of the law-givers conceded the right to asceticism to women. In spite of all these references, however, the authors of our period do not generally elaborate on the point. Female ascetics do not seem to be generally favoured by the law-givers of our age, who can be accepted to have represented its general spirit. The reason must have been the desire to consolidate the institution of the family. We notice resentment against the deviant behaviour of women in the Kali descriptions.[4] They are expressly directed to stick to family life. "Fortunate are women," says Vyāsa, "because in the Kali age their faults or sins are washed away by the merit gained through even the slighhtest effort of obedience to their husbands."[5]

It was prescribed for a Brāhmaṇa that while entering ascetic life he should leave his house after making an oblation to Prajāpati, in which he should bestow all his wealth upon the priests as fee for the performance of sacrifice, and then repose the fires in his own self.[6] He is not required to enkindle fire. He should be indifferent to everything, be of firm purpose, silent and have his mind concentrated.[7] According to the *Vaikhānasa-Dharma-Praśna*,[8] a saṃnyāsin should wander alone without any fixed abode for, as long as he is alone, he is a bhikṣu; two make a pair, three a village and more a town, although for the rainy season he should have a fixed abode.[9] An ascetic should be indifferent to respect or insult, should give up discussion, anger, greed, error, or falsehood.[10] He should enter the village only to beg and he has to beg only once a day.[11]

There were different categories of Saṃnyāsins like parivrāj, ātura, paramahaṃsa,[12] etc. Again in the *Bhikṣuka Upaniṣad*, we find four types of them exerting for emancipation, i.e., Kuṭicaka, Bahūdaka, Haṃsa and Paramahaṃsa. There might have been many more types.

[1]Patañj., *Mahābh.*, II, p. 100.
[2]*Viṣ. Sm.*, 35.7; *Nārada*, XII.74.
[3]*Mbh.*, XII.232.32; Jayal, *Status of Women in the Epics*, Delhi, 1966, pp. 21ff.
[4]vide *supra*, pp. 26-7.
[5]*Viṣ. P.*, VI.2.34-36.
[6]*Manu*, VI.38; cf. *Yāj.*, III.56; *Viṣ. Sm.*, 96.51.
[7]*Manu*, VI.42-43; *BDS*, II.10.18.22.
[8]*Vaikh. Dh. Pr.*, III.6.
[9]*GDS*, I.3.12; *BDS*, II.6.11.20.
[10]*Vaikh. Dh. Pr.*, III.6.ff.
[11]*Manu*, VI.55-59; cf. *Yāj.*, III.58-59.
[12]*Jābāla. Up.*, 2f., cf. *Manu*, VI.85-86.

What seems more important to us is that the study of the Vedas was prescribed and carried on by ascetics of the Vedasaṃnyāsika type who are differentiated by Manu from Yatis.[1] For the ascetics of the former category the study of the Vedas was compulsory.

Thus, while systematizing the āśramas our law-givers carefully tried to discourage all the Varṇas, except Brāhmaṇas, from joining the Saṃnyāsa āśrama.[2] The age limit, if followed strictly, would make the chances bleak even for the Brāhmaṇas to embrace this order. But references to the prevalence of various kinds of ascetics lead us to conclude that this was quite popular an institution. By institutionalizing it within the Varṇa fold, the Brāhmaṇic authors seem to have successfully attempted to cool down the revolting temper of heterodoxy and brought about a composite faith of Neo-Orthodoxy.

[1] *Manu*, VI.86; cf. *BDS*, II.18.24.
[2] *Manu*, VI.83.

Chapter 8

BRĀHMAṆAS IN POLITICS AND ADMINISTRATION

1. A Reappraisal of the Theory of Brāhmaṇic Reaction Against Mauryan Heterodoxy

In our attempt at tracing the role of the Brāhmaṇas in the period following the break up of the Mauryan Empire, it seems necessary to take into account the theory of Brāhmaṇic Reaction, alternatively forwarded and rejected by scholars with equal conviction and force. MM. Haraprasād Śāstrī advanced the theory that a reaction promoted by the Brāhmaṇas sapped the foundations of the Mauryan Empire.[1] H.C. Raychaudhuri strongly controverted this view, showing other causes responsible for its dismemberment. We propose to re-examine the validity of arguments for and against this theory.

Rejecting the view of H.P. Śāstrī, Raychaudhuri averred that 'prohibition of animal sacrifices did not necessarily imply hostility towards Brāhmaṇas.' He cited passages from the Upaniṣads in his support and argued that 'long before Aśoka, Brāhmaṇa sages, whose teachings have found a place in the Holy 'Śruti,' declared in no uncertain terms against sacrifices and in favour of 'ahiṃsā' (non-violence).''[2]

This argument seems to have ignored the undercurrent dichotomy between the path of knowledge (*jñāna-mārga*) preached in the Upaniṣads and that of action (*karma-mārga*). The world-affirming '*pravṛtti mārga*, which upholds 'Karmakāṇḍa' of orthodox sacerdotalism as the most efficacious way to attain dharma, is directly opposed to the life-negating and world-denying philosophy of the 'nivṛttimārga.' This conservative section of the Vedo-centric Brāhmaṇas closely adhered to the Śrauta tradition in which sacrifices involving slaughter of animals[3] were almost cultural compulsives. That despite the challenges from the Buddhists and other faiths, this tradition continued almost unabated is evidenced by the growth

[1] *JPASB*, 1910, VI, pp. 259ff.

[2] Raychaudhuri, *PHIA*, 1950, 5th. ed., pp. 355-15.

[3] *ĀŚSūt.*, VI.1.1-3, VI.3.3., IX.11.1, III.9.5-9, IX.3-4, IX.9.2-3, X.6-10; *Āp. ŚSūt.*, XIV. 2.3, XIV.4.12-16, XIX.1-10, XVIII.8-22, X.1.23; *ŚŚSūt.*, XV.15; *LŚSūt*, X.1.1., *KŚSūt.* XIV.3.14, XX.1.1.

of sacrificial literature. The Brāhmaṇa texts which truly represented the sacrificial tradition, branched off into Śrauta, Gṛhya and the Dharma Sūtras. This sacrificial tradition presents a bit of contrast to the Upaniṣadic trend and the Śrauta literature seems to have been composed after the earlier Upaniṣads, obviously, to preserve the conservative sacerdotal tradition against the cryptic challenge of the Upaniṣadic thought-flux and positive menace of heterodoxy. This Śrauta literature seeks to keep the sacrificial tradition undiminished even up to *circa* third century BC.[1] The new cult of non-violence, so earnestly championed by Buddhism and other sects, could not make any great success even in the time of Aśoka in the face of strong resistance by the sacerdotal class and the general tendency of the people to adhere to it. The prevalence of such sacrifices during Aśoka's time is well evidenced by the imperial statute itself against the killing of animals.

As Aśoka was tolerant in his religious policy, the banning of animal sacrifice was not consciously directed against the Vedic sacerdotal class. But this ban certainly promoted the cause of Buddhism, as prohibition of killing was ordered particularly on the 'Uposatha' days.[2] This might have caused incipient resentment among the priestly section of the Brāhmaṇas. The resumption of these sacrifices after the decline of the Mauryas was made possible also by the war-like atmosphere created by foreign inroads, but the strong recommendations of the Brāhmaṇic authors in favour of sacrifices certainly betray their reaction. Manu incorporates non-violence[3] in the list of virtues, but it is rightly opined that he had also "to defend those sacrifices from the denunciations of the Buddhists."[4]

As regards the contention of H.P. Śāstrī that the Śūdra-origin of the Mauryas was another factor leading to the Brāhmaṇ's resentment against Aśoka's policy, the scholars like H.C. Raychaudhari[5] and R.K. Mookerji[6] have well refuted the theory of the Maurya's origin from the Śūdras. But the problem as to what was the actual origin of the Mauryas, in our opinion, is not pertinent here so much. It is far more important to note the contradictory traditions on the point presented by the Brāhmaṇa and the Buddhist authors. The Buddhist tradition held the Mauryas of Kṣatriya origin,[7] while in the Brāhmaṇical literature, they are treated as Śūdras[8] and

[1] *ĀDS*, II.26.1; *GDS*, XIX.9; *VDS*, XI; *BDS*, II.1.4-5; see also *KArth.*, I.19.23, V.3.3, and the later works; *Manu*, VII.79. XI.75,83, *Yāj.*, I.314; *Viṣ. Sm.*, 3.81, 84.

[2] RE. V. vide *Aśoka ke Abhilekha*, ed. Pandey, pp. 146-46.

[3] *Manu*, V.54; cf. V.11-18; 48.53.

[4] Wheeler, *Ancient and Hindu India* (*The Brahmanic Period*), 1961, p. 95.

[5] Raychaudhuri, op. cit., pp. 266-67 and 355-56.

[6] Mookerji, *Chandragupta Maurya and his Times*, University of Madras, 1943, pp. 9-24.

[7] *Mahāvaṃsa*, tr. Geiger, p. 27; cf. *Mahāparinibbāna Sutta*, *SBE*, XI, pp. 134-35; *Divyā.*, p. 409.

[8] vide Pargiter, *DKA*, p. 25.

Vṛṣalas.[1] Their derogatory estimation by the Brāhmaṇical tradition seems to have been on account of serious deviations of the two greatest monarchs of Mauryan line, i.e., Candragupta and Aśoka from the orthodox standard. Candragupta was converted to Jainism towards the end of his life,[2] while Aśoka had his independent polity, neglected priestly aspirations, and propagated his own Dhamma, derived largely from the Buddhist scriptures. In fact, the term 'Vṛṣala' is so much indicative of the Brāhmaṇas' resentment against anything unorthodox that it is used against the Buddha himself. He is derogatively styled a 'Vasalaka' (i.e. Vṛṣala).[3] Suppose we believe that the Mauryas were of Kṣatriya origin and plausibly accept that the fact was not unknown to the contemporary authors, it becomes all the more evident that it was only their resentment or reaction which was responsible for the formulation of the tradition that the Mauryas were of Śūdra origin or, at least that their activities in relation to the orthodox tradition resembled those of the Śūdras; hence described as 'adhārmika.'[4] It is no wonder that the Brāhmaṇas of the Paurāṇika tradition called the Mauryas 'Asuras.'[5]

H.C. Raychaudhuri holds the view that the appointment of the Dharmamahāmātras by Aśoka 'was not a direct invasion of the right and privileges of the Brāhmaṇas' because they were not only the superintendents of morals but were also employed to establish law and piety, which included liberality to Brāhmaṇas and promotion of the welfare of all the people, including Brāhmaṇas. He argues that "there is nothing to show that the Dharmamahāmātras were wholly recruited from non-Brāhmaṇas.'[6]

But the problem before the Brāhmaṇas, especially the intellectuals and those of the orthodox circles, was not so much of being benefited by liberality and the welfare programmes. The problem before them was to face the challenge of Buddhism which was becoming increasingly dominant in the state and at the popular level to the detriment of Vedic orthodox culture. The foremost duty of the Dharmamahāmātras was to implement fully the laws of Dhamma or Piety proclaimed by the emperor. The very idea of preaching or establishment of Dhamma, propounded by a king among the people, not to speak of the Brāhmaṇas, would have been an act causing resentment in the conservative sections of the Brāhmaṇas, especially when it was promulgated by a king who, though tolerant, had obviously associated himself with a rival faith.

In fact, the welfare activities promulgated through the Dharmamahāmātras would have been welcomed by the Brāhmaṇa destitutes as also by those who were unconcerned with any aspirations to re-establish Vedicism.

[1]*Mudrārākṣasa* of Viśākhadatta, ed. Satyavrata Singh, Varanasi, 1954, pp. 138, 140, 141ff; *Manu* X.43, describes Śūdras as Vṛṣala; see also *IHQ*, 1930, pp. 271ff.

[2]vide *Pariśiṣṭaparvan*, ed. Jacobi, 2nd Ed., p. LXXIX; VIII, 415ff.

[3]*Saṃ. Nik.*, I, p. 162. vide Mookerji, *Hindu Civilization*, p. 264.

[4]Pargiter, op. cit., p. 25.

[5]*Mar. P.*, 88.5

[6]Raychaudhuri, op. cit., pp. 357-58.

But the mass of Brāhmaṇical literature of the several centuries before and after the Christian era, e.g., the Dharmaśāstras, Arthaśāstra, Epics, Smṛtis, Purāṇas etc. indicates the untiring efforts of the Brāhmaṇas to maintain the orthodox tradition, and they could not remain in any way unconcerned with any counter-movement, undoubtedly, represented by the Dharma and Dharmamahāmātras of Aśoka.

Aśoka took to 'Dharma-Vijaya' as a measure to consolidate[1] his empire and extend his sway through 'dhamma' of the Buddhist character. He, naturally, did not honour the tradition of Brāhmaṇical polity and the Varṇāśramadharma; rather, granting discretionary powers to the Rājūkas, he desired that Vyavahārasamatā and Daṇḍasamatā should be maintained.[2] H.C. Raychaudhuri has raised an objection to the interpretation of 'Vyavahārasamatā' and 'Daṇḍasamatā' as equalities in law suits.' He interprets the terms as 'uniformity in judicial procedure and uniformity in penalties,' 'so that the Vyavahāra and Daṇḍa prevalent within the jurisdiction of one Rājūka should not be entirely different from those prevailing within the jurisdiction of others.'[3] But 'Samatā' as 'uniformity' may also be taken as uniformity of procedure and penalty, irrespective of the claims or actual privileges of any class, e.g., the Brāhmaṇas. It is rightly held 'that the emperor wanted his Rājūkas to administer justice to his people with equality and impartiality.'[4] The passages from Brāhmaṇical literature pointed out by Raychaudhuri to support that Brāhmaṇas were not 'really immune under all circumstances from capital punishment in ancient India,' should be regarded as operative under exceptional circumstances and not as constituting a general rule. It is to be noted that immunity of the Brāhmaṇas from capital punishment was not the only thing they claimed. They laid claims to so many other privileges also. In fact, the general disruption of the Varṇadharma was the problem which must have agitated them most.[5]

Most of the Post-Aśokan Maurya kings could not maintain cordial relations with the Brāhmaṇic orthodoxy and the utter discontent of the Brāhmaṇas against the Mauryas is evidenced in the *Yuga Purāṇa* of the *Gārgī Saṃhitā*, wherein the basis of their resentment seems to be the general loss of social and religious traditions of the Vedic fold. The Brāhmaṇical reaction against Aśoka's policy of 'Damma Vijaya' is echoed in the account of the conduct of Śāliśūka. *Yuga Purāṇa* presents him as a wicked soul (*duṣṭātman*), fond of quarrels and conflicts (*priyavigrahaḥ*), of an irreligious nature (*adhārmikaḥ*), and of foolish temperament

[1]Thapar, *ADM*, pp. 142-48.

[2]PE. IV, Pandey, *Aśoka Ke Abhilekha*, p. 143; vide also Bhandarkar, *Aśoka*, 3rd. ed., pp. 168-69.

[3]Raychaudhuri, *PHIA*, pp. 358-59.

[4]Ghosh in *IHC* (Proc.), VI Session, 1943, p. 111; cf. PE. IV; vide Bhattacharya, *Select Aśokan Epigraphs*, Calcutta, 1960, p. 45fn.

[5]cf. Dutt, *A History of Civilization in Ancient India*, II, p. 306; Mees, *Dharma and Society*, London, p. 96.

(*mohātman*), who sought to establish the so-called conquest of Dhamma (*Vijayam nāma dhārmikam*[1]). The passage may well refer to his killing of virtuous elder brother noted for his qualities,[2] and may be 'pregnant with a subtle irony and parody . . . the expression 'mohātman' is a parody of 'devānampriya,' the title of Aśoka and Daśaratha, and Vijayam nāma dhārmikam' is a paraphrase of 'Dharmavijaya' of the thirteenth Rock Edict of Aśoka.[3]

Patañjali described the Mauryas as sellers of the images of the gods.[4] This also might have been a cause of the low estimation of them in the orthodox circles.

Thus we find that the social and religious policies of Aśoka, so far as they were allied with or guided by Buddhism, seem to have caused a reactionary zeal amongst the orthodox Brāhmaṇas and possibly also amongst other Varṇas of conservative disposition.

The Nature of Brāhmaṇas' Reaction

MM. H.P. Śāstrī's sweeping statement that the reaction promoted by the Brāhmaṇas had sapped the foundations of the Mauryan authority and dismembered the empire.[5] ignores other historical factors. The causes of the downfall of the Mauryas were many,[6] and the Brāhmaṇic reaction was only one of them. Similarly, the reaction of the Brāhmaṇas against the Mauryas was a part of their general reaction against the heterodox challenge and the dominance of Buddhism. A sort of tension between orthodox Vedism and heterodoxy existed since long before the Mauryas.

Although Puṣyamitra's revolt meant the virtual end of the Mauryan rule, it is difficult to believe that the Brāhmaṇic reaction had sapped the foundation of the Mauryan Empire which was already decayed and declining. Puṣyamitra's killing of Bṛhadratha and seizing of the Magadhan throne does not seem truly to be a 'coup d'état,' rather it can best be described as 'coup de grâce.' Further, his seizure of power must have become easier on account of foreign inroads. It seems that the general reaction of orthodoxy expressed in the cultural matters, as we have already seen, could be connected with Puṣyamitra's coup only remotely and indirectly. The contraditory traditions of the Brāhmaṇical and Buddhist texts regarding the Mauryas[7] and Puṣyamitra[8] may indicate that the latter got the support of orthodox circles in his bid for power. It has to be admitted that the personal ambition of Puṣyamitra must have been an important factor in his coup, though his continuing to call himself a 'Senāpati'

[1]*JBORS*, 1928, pp. 402ff, cf. ibid, 1930, pp. 20, 24. see also *Yuga Purāṇa*, ed. Mankad, Vallabhvidyanagar, 1951, pp. 9, 33.

[2]cf. Kern, *Preface to Bṛhat Saṃhitā*, p. 36; cf. *JBORS*, 1928, 402ff.

[3]Buddha Prakash, *SIHC*, Agra, p. 171.

[4]Patañjali on Pāṇini, V.3.99.

[5]*JPASB*, 1910, p. 259.

[6]Raychaudhuri, op. cit., pp. 362-66; cf. Thapar, op. cit., pp. 197ff.

[7]vide *supra*, pp. 199-200. [8]vide *infra*, pp. 210-2.

does not show much of imperial ambition in him. It can be plausibly said that the political expression of the Brāhmaṇas' cultural reaction against heterodoxy and Mauryas came through the military channel and not through any manoeuvring of priests.

2. Brāhmaṇical Dynasties

With the extinction of the Mauryan dynasty starts a troubled potitical state. The Śuṅgas,[1] Kaṇvas,[2] Sātavāhanas,[3] Vākāṭakas,[4] and Kadambas,[5] who came in rapid succession after the Mauryas were all Brāhmaṇical dynasties and most of them played important roles in the socio-political life of the country.

3. India and Foreign Inroads

Foreign Inroads and Buddhism

The proselytizing zeal of Buddhism gave it a cultural disposition of a liberal nature. Though Buddhism in *c.* second century BC was not completely free from caste notions, as a missionary religion it had but to keep its doors open to all. With its popular note it was in an advantageous position in its relation to foreigners and easily established cordial relations with them, many a time welcoming them to its fold.

Buddhism got fresh impetus under the protection of foreigners. Menander and Kaniṣka were the celebrated patrons of Buddhism. Menander, one of the greatest Indo-Bactrian rulers of the 2nd century BC[6] is immortalized in the *Milindapañho* of the Thera Nāgasena. The probability is not overruled that "he (Menander) was instrumental in inviting

[1]*HV. P.*, III.2.40; see also Jayaswal, *JBORS*, 1928, pp. 24-25. Regarding Śungas' gotra see also *Aṣṭādh*, IV.1.117; *Br. Up.*, VI.4.31; VII.5.2; *Vaṃśa Brāhmaṇa* and *Āssūt.*, XII. 13.5; vide *Ved. Ind.*, II, p. 395. see also for different views on the Śuṇgas, Raychaudhury, vide *IC*, VI, p. 410; *A Comprehensive History of India*, II, pp. 95-96fn; cf. Ghosh, 'Caste of the Śuṅgas,' vide *IHQ*, XV, p. 629; Kosambi, *ISIH*, pp. 231-32; *JASB*, 1912, pp. 287-88.

[2]see *ṚV*, VIII.55.4; Sāyaṇa on *ṚV*, I.51.1; VIII.2.40; *Br. Up.*, VI.5.1-2.

[3]vide Senart, *EI*, VIII, p. 60; Bühler, *ASWI*, IV, p. 110, V, p. 64 n. 4; Raychaudhuri op. cit., pp. 413-14fn; cf. The views of Bhandarkar, vide *EI*, XXII, pp. 32ff. The Jaina tradition as preserved in the *Dvātrimśat-Puttalikā* would have us believe that they had mixture of the Nāga blood in them. vide R.G. Bhandarkar, *EHD*, Sec. VII. The Nasik Cave Inscription of Vāsiṣṭhīputra Pulumāvi describes Gautamīputra Śātakarṇi as *Ek Brāhmaṇa* (Unique Brāhmaṇa). He is also said to be 'Khatiya-dapa-mana-madanas' (the destroyer of the pride and conceit of the Kṣatriyas.' vide *SI*, I, pp. 197-98.

[4]Bēlōrā Copper Plate of Pravarasena, vide Mm. Mirashi, *Vakataka Rajavamsha ka Itihasa tatha Abhilekha* (Hindi), Varanasi, 1964, p. 149; cf. *EI*, XXIV, p. 264; see also *Hyderabad Archaeological Series*, no. 14; (Vākāṭaka Inscription in Cave, XVI at Ajantā, V.V. Mirashi), Hyderabad; *EI*, XXVI, p. 146.

[5]vide *EI*, VIII, pp. 24-36; see also George M. Moraes, *Kadamba-Kula*, Bombay 1931, p. 16.

[6]Narain, *The Indo-Greeks*, p. 100.

Demetrius to defend the cause of Buddhism against the persecution of Puṣyamitra."[1] The Buddhist legends depict him, as in the case of Aśoka, embracing arhatahood. Tarn opines that "certain preliminaries to the meeting of Menander and Nāgasena in the Milindapañho are supposed to be taken from the story of the meeting of Aśoka with Tissa Mogaliputta."[2] Plutarch has described[3] the distribution of Menander's ashes among cities and stūpas erected to preserve it which resembles the legends of Buddha relic. Scholars differ on the nature of the exact relations of Menander with Buddhism.[4] It is, however, beyond doubt that, whether actuated by political motive or moved by some intuitive inspirations, he was more than a patron of Buddhism and contributed a lot to its development. It is almost certain that Menander would not have been extolled so much by the Buddhists had he not embraced their faith and championed their cause.[5] In the votive inscriptions in Prākrit found at Karla in Poona district a large number of Yavanas appear as Buddhists.[6]

The Buddhists were able to win over the Kuṣāṇa ruler Kaniṣka I also, who reigned in the first century AD. His empire stretched from Peshawar to Mathura and, as shown by his inscription at Sarnath, even up to Banaras.[7] Kaniṣka played a positive role in the spread of Buddhism and the emergence of Mahāyānism. He is credited to have convened the Fourth Buddhist Council at Kashmir which was presided over by Vasumitra. As *Si-yu-ki* informs us, he caused the deliberations of the Council to be reduced to writings on copper plates and enclosed them in stone boxes.[8]

Thus, after the decline and extinction of the Mauryas and the steady political ascendancy of the orthodox religion, Buddhism gained support of the foreign rulers who greatly championed its cause. It is only on the coins of foreign rulers that the image of the Buddha finds its depiction. Foucher maintains[9] that the earliest figure of the Buddha appears on some of the coins of Kaniṣka, while Tarn thinks that its earliest representation is to be found on the coins of Maues and Kujula Kadphises.[10]

[1] *A Comprehensive History of India*, II, p. 365.
[2] Tarn, *Greeks in Bactria and India*, p. 267.
[3] Moralia 821 D-E. vide Narain, *The Indo Greeks*, Oxford, 1962, p. 98.
[4] Tarn, op. cit., pp. 268-69; Marshall, *Taxila*, p. 33; Narain, op. cit., 97-98; *CHI*, I, p. 551.
[5] Chattopadhyaya, *EHNI*, p. 37.
[6] *CII*, II, Pt. I, pp. 4, 8, 65-66, 114 etc.; S. Lévi; 'Le Buddhisme et les Grecs,' vide *Memorial Sylvain Lévi*, pp. 204ff.
[7] Cunningham, *Ancient Geography of India*, Ed. Majumdar Sastri, Calcutta, 1924, p. XLIII; *A Comprehensive History of India*, II, p. 237.
[8] Watters on *Yuan Chwang's Travels in India*, II, 1905, p. 271; cf. Samuel Beal, *Travels of Hiouen-Thsang*, II, 1958 (New Edition), Calcutta, pp. 191ff; cf. Giles, *Travels of Fa-Hsien*, tr., pp. 13-14.
[9] Foucher, *L'Art Greco-Boddhique du Gandhāra*, II, pp. 439, 519.
[10] Tarn, op. cit., p. 403.

Foreign Inroads and Jainism

Jainism lagged behind Buddhism in winning over converts and securing popularity either with the native people or with foreigners. Though it could claim kings like Candragupta Maurya, his descendant Samprati, and Khāravela to its fold, its role in the general history of our period was greatly overshadowed by Buddhism. The relations between orthodoxy and Buddhism were of far more cultural importance than those of the former and Jainism. The Jainas soon came to terms with ritualism and orthodoxy which facilitated its steady progress in later times also.[1]

There is, however, an interesting tradition regarding Kālakācārya, a well known Jaina monk who joined hands with Śaka chiefs in order to take vengeance on Gardabhilla, the king of Ujjain, who had abducted his sister. The *Prabhāvakacarita* by Prabhācandra Sūrī of the 14th. century AD estimated to be based on earlier works of sound tradition,[2] relates the story that Kālaka, actuated by retaliatory motives, went westward across the river Indus in the country of the Śakhinas (*Śakas*) where ninety Śaka chiefs were ruling. He induced them to march towards India in search of new homes. Accordingly, crossing the Indus by boats, the Śakas entered Surāṣṭra. After consolidating their power they conquered Pāñcāla and Lāṭa and reached the borders of Malwa. Finally, the Śaka army attacked and defeated Gardabhilla, and Kālaka rescued his sister.[3]

This story comes in the form of a tradition but its historicity can be judged only against the background of the Śaka invasion in the first century BC. Scholars like Rapson, Sten Konow, and A. S. Altekar tend to believe its historical setting.[4]

Foreign Inroads and the Brāhmaṇas

The amicable relations of the Buddhists with the foreigners is greatly contrasted to the deep reaction of the orthodox Brāhmaṇas against them. It is said: "there will be Yavanas here by reason of religious feelings or ambition or plunder; they will not be kings solemnly anointed but will follow evil customs by reason of the corruptions of the age. Massacring women and children and killing one another, the (Yavana) kings will enjoy the earth at the end of the Kali age."[5]

The orthodox Brāhmaṇas reacted strongly against foreigners and condemned them as Mlecchas. A cultural antagonism was at the root of this tension and opposition. The above quoted passage shows that Brāhmaṇas

[1]Kosambi, op. cit., p. 115.

[2]Pandey, *Vikramāditya of Ujjainī*, 1951, p. 28.

[3]ibid, pp. 29-30; cf. Jain, *The Jaina Sources of History of Ancient India*, Delhi, 1964, pp. 60ff.

[4]Rapson, *CHI* I, pp. 523-33; Sten Konow, *CII*, II, Pt. I, Intro. p. XXVII; Altekar, *Nāgarī Prachāriṇī Patrikā*, Vikrama Number, VS 2000, pp. 85-86; vide also Norman Brown, *The Story of Kālaka*.

[5]Pargiter, *DKA*, pp. 56, 74.

were opposed to their rule on religious grounds because in the eyes of the orthodox circles these chieftains had no ritual sanction to rule since they were not anointed. Besides opposition to their evil customs, their oppression was a factor which generated an acute reaction amongst the Brāhmaṇas. Brāhmaṇas' resentment against unrighteous foreign rule was quite deep and it is well-preserved in the literary traditions. The *Bṛhatkathā Mañjarī* of Kṣemendra belonging to eleventh century AD, which is based on the *Bṛhatkathā* of Guṇāḍhva of 1st. century AD, gives a vivid account of the oppressive ru'e of the Śakas.[1] The same story is described in the *Kathāsaritsāgara* of Somadeva [2] These foreigners are presented to be particularly ill-disposed towards the Brāhmaṇas. They are said to have destroyed the Brāhmaṇical religion and oppressed the Brāhmaṇas.

The hostile relation between the Brāhmaṇical Orthodoxy and the foreign invaders, especially the Greeks and Śakas, as depicted in the *Yuga Purāṇa* and other literature, must be referring to the phenomena of antagonism shown by these outlandish people against the Brāhmaṇical socio-cultural system in the initial stages of their incursions. Before the process of their actual assimilation in the Neo-Orthodoxy started, this antagonism must have existed between them.

But the frenzy of the foreign rulers and perpetration of oppression by them on the Brāhmaṇas were of their own invitation. An intense aversion expressed by them against foreigners let loose the latter's wrath on them. Brāhmaṇas championed the orthodox cause, rather militantly, called them Mlecchas and preached their social boycott. Going back to the time of Alexander's invasion, the notices of Greek authors about Brāhmaṇas seem to confirm our view. Arrian informs us that Alexander himself led his army against the city of the Brāhmaṇas (Brachmanoi) in which 5000 of them were killed and a few were taken prisoners.[3] They are especially described to have instigated revolt against Alexander who put to death all the Brāhmaṇas of this sort.[4] It is said that all the prisoners together with the Brāhmaṇas who has instigated revolt against him were ordered to be taken to his own country and were hanged there.[5] Curtius and Diodorus support the account of Arrian.[6] Plutarch with reference to the Brāhmaṇas, says: 'These philosopher gave him no less trouble than the mercenaries, because they reviled the princes who declared for him and encouraged the free states to revolt from his authority. On this account he hanged many of them.'[7] Further, Justin informs us that

[1] *Bṛhatkathā-Mañjarī*, X.1.8ff.

[2] *Kathāsaritsāgara*, XVIII. Ch. VI.1; VII.4; XII; vide Pandey, op. cit., pp. 16-18.

[3] Arrian, VI.16, vide McCrindle, *Invasion of India* by *Alexander* the *Great*, 1892, pp. 142ff.

[4] ibid, p. 159.

[5] ibid, p. 160.

[6] ibid, pp. 293ff.

[7] Plutarch, LIX, McCrindle, op. cit., p. 306; cf. p. 395 for Justin's account.

the Brāhmaṇas blamed the conduct of Kalanos, who, in violation of the duties of his caste, went to live with the Macedonians.[1] It is plain that the Brāhmaṇas did not recognise the authority of Alexander and questioned his greatness. Justin mentions[2] that they asked 'how could Alexander be the master of all the world when he has not yet gone beyond the river Tiberoboam.'[3]

Likewise, in our period the orthodox Brāhmaṇas could not reconcile themselves with the alien culture and condemned its harbingers as Mlechas, which was bound to provoke their fury. In fact, the orthodox intellectuals would have found it difficult to reconcile with them before they could adjust the orthodox social system and define their position as we have already seen. The barriers of the Varṇa system together with the non-missionary character of orthodoxy, at least in theory, were too disadvantageous to the Brāhmaṇas to establish any amicable relations with them. Quite contrarily, the Buddhists successfully met the situation and won them over to their fold. But the championship of Buddhism by the foreigners was all the more annoying to the Brāhmaṇas who naturally got unfriendly with them. In spite of this inherent shortcoming of orthodoxy, its struggle and competition with heterodoxy, impelled the orthodox lawgivers to adjust the social system so that they might be able admit the foreigners to the Varṇa scheme.[4] As regards religious matters, the difficult problem of admitting them to Vedic ceremonialism was solved by the carefully evolved Neo-Orthodoxy of a popular character which was open to all. These attempts and other like measures of the Brāhmaṇas seem to have met increasing success, as we find these foreign rulers not only patronizing the various sects of Neo-Orthodoxy but actually embracing them. In spite of this subsequent current, foreign invaders were initially zealously opposed by the native kings, which we propose to examine the next.

4. Brāhmaṇa Dynasties and Foreign Invasions

Puṣyamitra Śuṅga brought about the end of the Mauryan rule of Magadha by his 'coup de grâce' in about 184 BC. Bāṇa in the *Harṣacarita* says: 'under the pretext of showing him his 'entire' forces the wicked (*ar ārva*) General Puṣyamitra Śuṅga killed his master, Bṛhadratha, the Maurya, who was weak of intellect.'[5] This usurpation of the Magadhan power cannot but be connected with foreign invasions. In the face of serious threats of

[1]Justin, III, XII.9.10, vide also McCrindle, op. cit., p. 343.

[2]Justin, XIII.12, vide also McCrindle, op. cit., p. 343.

[3]Cunningham identifies this river with th: modern Tabranala, a small affluent of the Haro, which bends its course to the Indus and falls in it, twelve miles below Attock; see also S. Lévi in *Journal Asiatique*, XV of the 8th Series, pp. 236-37.

[4]vide *supra*, pp. 164-7.

[5]*Harṣacarita*, ed. Kane, Ch. VI, p. 50; cf. *Harṣacarita*, ed. Führer, p. 269.

the Indo-Greeks across the North-west frontiers, Magadha was badly in need of a talented fighter. Patañjali commenting on Pāṇini's rule, illustrates the use of affix 'laṇ,' the imperfect tense, which describes an event not having happened actually before but still within the sight of the narrator, by referring to the Yavana invasion. He mentions the event as 'the Yavana besieged Sāketa (Ayodhyā in Faizabad district) and Mādhyamika (near Chitor).'[1] The *Yuga Purāṇa* seems to refer to a developed stage of the same event when it says 'the vicious valiant Greeks reduced Sāketa, Pañcāla, Mathura and reached (or took over) Pāṭaliputra.'[2] It is to be noted that both of these accounts of Patañjali and the *Yuga Purāṇa* mention the invasion of Sāketa in common.[3] Further, Pataṇjali while illustrating the present tense, says: 'here we are causing Puṣyamitra to perform the sacrifice.'[4] In this connection it is interesting to note that Patañjali, while commenting on Pāṇini (VI.2.130), mentions the Brāhmaṇa-Rājya as the rule 'par excellence.' It clearly indicates that Patañjali, the great commentator, was the royal priest of Puṣyamitra Śuṅga. The point worthy of consideration is that he illustrates the horse-sacrifice in the present tense while the Greek invasion in the imperfect. It seems logical to believe that the Greek invasion preceeded the horse-sacrifice.

But the vague references of Patañjali and the *Yuga Purāṇa* do not help us in finding out as to under whose leadership the Greek intrusions took place and what was the actual performance of Puṣyamitra in this connection. Tarn has opined that Menander, as the commander of Demetrius I, intruded up to Pāṭaliputra which remained under the occupation of Demetrius for seven years from 175 BC to 167 BC.[5] Sircar tends to believe that Puṣyamitra twice came into contact with the Yavanas. He had to face the first Greek invasion as referred to in the *Mahābhāṣya* and the *Yuga Purāṇa* and a second one as described in the *Mālvikāgnimitra*. Regarding the first Yavana inroad he says, "This invasion might have taken place, while Puṣyamitra was yet a general of the Mauryas." He thinks that "it is not unlikely that this success against the Yavanas gives him a position, status and power which enabled him to make a successful bid for the throne."[6]

But it is interesting to note that in a few preceding lines of the *Yuga Purāṇa*, as reconstructed by Dhruva,[7] it is said: the "Yavanas . . . . lead

[1]Patañjali, on Pāṇini, III.2.111. *Mahābh*. ed. Kielhorn, II, p. 119.

[2]*JBORS*, XIV, 1928, pp. 402, 410, *JBORS*, 1930, p. 24.

[3]De la Vallée Poussin, *l'Inde Aux Temps Des Mauryas*, Paris, 1930, pp. 179-80.

[4]*Mahābh*, III.2.123. Var. I.

[5]Tarn, *Greeks in Bactria and India*, pp. 155-56; see also *JBORS*, 1928, pp. 397ff; *CHI*, I, p. 401; Raychaudhuri, *PHAI*, pp. 134, 137, 156-57; *A Comprehensive History of India*, II, pp. 151-55; Chattopadhyaya, *EHNI*, p. 3.

[6]*AIU*, p. 96; vide *JASB*, 1910, p. 261; Ghosh strongly argues that there had been two Greek invasions vide *JGRI*, IV, 1946, p. 45; Lahiri also maintains the view that Demetrius invaded Pāṭaliputra during the time of Bṛhadratha, vide *IHQ*, XXXIII, p. 48.

[7]*JBORS*, 1930, pp. 18ff.

an attack on Pāṭaliputra, having previously subjugated the country with Śākala for its capital, the land of the Pañcālas, and the country with Mathura for its capital. When they will reach Puṣpapura and construct an earthen causeway (across the moat), all the country will verily be seized with panic." Dhruva further reads in the following passages: "Ultimately a great and terrible battle will be fought there (under the walls of Pāṭaliputra)." "The Yavana chiefs that will survive the butchery of the battle, will make good their escape." Immediately after, the Purāṇa says: "There at the city of Pāṭaliputra with countless gardens, having won a victory, will be jubilant with holiday celebrations." The text further mentions the retreat of the Yavanas from the Madhyadeśa on account of the outbreak of a civil war in their home land.[1] Buddha Prakash interprets the festivities as signifying the celebration of Puṣyamitra's coup.[2] Accepting Mankad's reconstruction of the text as more authentic, he rules out the possibility of any battle between the Yavana and Puṣyamitra.[3] But a reliance on Dhruva's reconstruction of the text, as against the readings of K.P. Jayaswal and Mankad, would lead us to believe that the festivities were to celebrate the retreat of the Yavanas and the victory of the indigenous forces. It would be plausible to hold that the Yavanas after their reverses at Pāṭaliputra remained for some time in the Madhyadeśa but ultimately retreated on account of a civil war back home. The *Yuga Purāṇa*, according to the readings of Dhruva, would suggest another Yavana inroad from the regions of Śākala in the Punjab, in which, despite Yavana's reverses, Puṣyamitra was killed. But the suggestion of Sircar that Puṣyamitra might have been engaged in an armed clash with the Yavanas even before his coup,[4] can hardly be accepted in face of the statement that the Yavanas attacked during the reign of Śāliśūka or just after him, there being still three successors of Śāliśūka, who occupied the Mauryan throne before Puṣyamitra's usurpation of the same. Moreover, the doubtful account of the *Yuga Purāṇa* remains uncorroborated and we cannot make any definite statement on the actual achievements of Puṣyamitra in this regard. However, there is no doubt that the threat of Yavana invasion existed before his coup. As a capable general of keen insight he must have reorganised his army to meet any eventuality after the coup. His complete control over the Mauryan army is evidenced by Bāṇa's expression 'darśitāṣeśaṣainyaḥ' which would have us believe that the *entire* army pretended to be shown to Bṛhdratha was under his complete command and perhaps in his favour.[5] The *Yuga Purāṇa* seems to refer to the army of Puṣyamitra when it says that the army of a world-famous Brāhmaṇa

[1]vide *JBORS*, 1930, pp. 20-21; Eng. Tr., pp. 24-25; cf. Jayaswal, vide *JBORS*, 1928, pp. 402, 403, 404, 406, 407, Eng. Tr., pp. 409ff; Mankad, *Yuga Purāṇa*, pp. 33-39.

[2]Buddha Prakash, *SIHC*, p. 174.

[3]ibid, pp. 230-31fn, 221ff; cf Bagchi, vide *IHQ*, XXII, 1946, pp. 81ff.

[4]Chattopadhyaya, *EHNI*, pp. 7ff.

[5]Buddha Prakash, op. cit., p. 173 fn.

had two thousand horses and innumerable elephants.[1] The *Divyāvadāna* informs[2] us that Puṣyamitra led an expedition to Śākala[3] and probably conquered the Punjab, comprising a part of Subhagasena's kingdom.[4] It shows his resolute determination to consolidate the north-western frontiers.[5]

The *Mālavikāgnimitra* of Kālidāsa describes[6] the horse-sacrifice of Puṣyamitra Śuṅga. Accordingly, a sacrificial horse was let loose, accompanied by Vasumitra, the grandson of Puṣyamitra with one hundred royal princes. When the horse entered the territory under the occupation of the Yavanas on the bank of the river Sindhu, a terrible struggle took place in which they were given a crushing defeat.[7] Some scholars[8] try to identify the river Sindhu with one of its two namesake in Central India, which is well refuted by R.C. Majumdar, who rightly identifies it with the Indus in the Punjab.[9] Relying on Kālidāsa, it may be concluded that the battle against the Yavanas under the command of Vasumitra was of great importance in so far as it was a massive mobilization of Indian forces. A great zeal for defending the indigenious culture must have been sparked off in the Indian army as the expedition was connected with the performance of the symbolic Aśvamedha sacrifice. It is suggested that the successful battle was fought against an advance column of Menander's forces.[10] However, the last expedition of Puṣyamitra to the north-west frontier proved fatal and he fell fighting Kṛmiśa (Demetrius II) in either 154 BC or 149 BC.[11]

The Buddhist Reaction against Puṣyamitra Śuṅga

Puṣyamitra figures as the most intolerant ruler in Buddhist traditions. The *Divyāvadāna* and Tāranātha charge him to be a great persecutor of the Buddhists. Tāranātha first describes him as a royal Purohita but later on mentions him as Brāhmaṇa-king,[12] who, induced by his Brāhmaṇa

[1] *Yuga Purāṇa*, ed. Mankad, ll. 148 and 153, p. 39.

[2] *Divyā*, pp. 426, 433-34.

[3] A.K. Narain's contention that Śākala should be in the vicinity of Pāṭaliputra does not seem to be sound, vide *Indo-Greeks*, pp. 87 *per contra* the view of Buddha Prakash, op. cit., p. 218.

[4] ibid, p. 217.

[5] cf. Majumdar, "North India After the Fall of the Mauryan Empire," vide *Prof. A.S. Altekar Commemoration Volume*, *JNSI*, XXII, 1960, Varanasi, pp. 52-53.

[6] *Mālavikāg.*, V.15, ed. by Shankar Pandurang Pandit, Bombay Sanskrit Series, 2nd. ed., 1889, p. 153.

[7] *Mālavikāg.*, p. 154.

[8] *CHI*, I, p. 520; De La Vallée Poussin, op. cit., p. 179; Tarn, *Greeks in Bactria and India*, p. 228.

[9] Majumdar, vide *IHQ*, I, pp. 91ff.

[10] *A Comprehensive History of India*, II, p. 97 and fn.

[11] Buddha Prakash, op. cit., pp. 219, 210; cf. *AIU*, p. 97; *A Comprehensive History of India*, II, p. 100fn.

[12] Schiefner, *Tāranātha's Geschichte des Buddhismus im Indien*, Ch. XVI, vide Jayaswal in *JBORS*, 1918, IV, pp. 257-59. On the basis of Tāranātha's information, Jayaswal opines that Puşyamitra belonged to the family of the royal chaplain to the Mauryas.

Chaplain, made an abortive attempt to demolish the important monastery of Kukkuṭārāma in Pāṭaliputra. The *Divyāvadāna* says that he led an expedition to Śākala with his fourfold army, destroying Stūpas, burning monasteries and massacring Buddhists. He declared at Śākala (Sialkot) a reward of hundred Dīnāras for every Śramaṇa's head.[1] It is difficult to check the validity of the Buddhist tradition about Puṣyamitra. There is absolutely no other source to corroborate it. The Buddhist descriptions seem to have been mixed with their psychological reactions against the championship of orthodoxy by Puṣyamitra. The account seems to have been deliberately made fantastic. It is strange to be told that Puṣyamitra refrained from his bid to destroy the Kukkuṭārāma monastery because he was frightened by the roar of a lion.[2] It would be improper, however, to totally reject the Buddhist accounts, which might have a substratum of truth in them. Buddhism was quite popular in the north-western frontier region, and the Buddhists' joining hands with foreigners might have been suspected by Puṣyamitra. This Buddhist collusion with foreigners would have certainly proved detrimental to his political ambitions at a time when he was engaged in his expedition to distant Śākala. It is to be noted that before Puṣyamitra's death Menander, the greatest champion of Buddhism, had already come into power in *c.* 155 BC[3] in the North-west regions, exerting great pressure on Sākala (Sāgala) region. The Buddhists, frustrated by the drastic changes in Magadha under Puṣyamitra, concentrated their activities in the north-west where they sought and gained the patronage of the Greek rulers. It is not unlikely that the treatment of Puṣyamitra towards this alignment of the Buddhists[4] with foreigners was harsh. This must have been, however, motivated by political considerations, rather than being rooted in any religious fanaticism against the Buddhists.

Besides, it is not unlikely that the word 'Śramaṇa' used in this connection might stand for the new Greek converts to Buddhism. In that case, the account of Puṣyamitra's persecution of the Buddhists could quite plausibly be relied upon. The brunt of Puṣyamitra's military expedition to the north-west must have been borne by the Greeks, whether Buddhists by faith or otherwise. To Buddhist authors their persecution might have been a point of deep resentment.

Though the view is not unchallenged,[5] many scholars conclude that the

He thinks that on account of Aśoka's changed policy Puṣyamitra's family 'would have had its source of livelihood so curtailed as to oblige its members to take to other professions, and Puṣyamitra, it seems, took that of arms," vide *JBORS*, 1918, p. 259.

[1] *Divyā.*, ed. Cowell, p. 426, see also pp. 429-34; vide, *IHQ*, XXII, 81ff.

[2] *Divyā.*, ed. Cowell, p. 434.

[3] Narain, op. cit., pp. 77-81; see also *Milinda.*, *SBE*, XXXVI, pp. 1, 2, 23; see also supra p. 210.

[4] cf. Jayaswal in *JBORS*, 1918, p. 263.

[5] Ghosh taking support from the view of Majumdar, *A Guide to the Sculptures in the Indian Museum*, p. 14, points out that the gateways containing the inscription of the Śuṅgan time were erected at least half a century after the construction of the orginal railing, *IHC*, Proc., 1943, p. 116.

beautifully sculptured railings of Sanchi and Bharhuta were added to the monuments in Puṣyamitra's reign which would certainly show his religious toleration, ordinarily the most common quality in almost all Indian kings.[1]

Further, the condemnation of Puṣyamitra in the Buddhist tradition should be viewed in the background of prevailing rivalry between orthodoxy and Buddhism. In fact, what was a glorious period for one was very likely a dark period for the other. *Mañjushrīmūlakalpa*,[2] putting a prophecy in the mouth of the Buddha, says about the time of Puṣyamitra, 'In the Low Age (Yugādhame) there will be king, the chief Gomimukhya . . . . 'distroyer of my religion. Having seized the East and the gate of Kashmira, he, the fool, the wicked, will destroy monasteries with relics, and kill monks of good conduct."[3] This description closely resembles the account about Puṣyamitra as found in the *Divyāvadāna*. But here his real name is replaced by the abusive term Gomi-Shaṇḍa, i.e., Gomi the bull. The deep contempt for Puṣyamitra is further expressed in the curse that "he was destined to a dreadful suffering in hell."[4] Thus, the Buddhist theory of low age and condemnation of Puṣyamitra go together. Their unfavourable treatment at the hands of Śuṅgas might be the nucleus of this tradition but, it seems, in reality, it was the political ascendancy of orthodoxy which was at the root of the exaggerations of the same.

The successors of Puṣyamitra, including the Kāṇvāyana rulers, do not seem to have achieved any spectacular success against the foreign inroads. A rapid succession of kings is marked by rivalry for power making the central power increasingly week and disintegrated, with the result that was, the Punjab passed into the hands of the Greeks. The Greek dominance was, in its own turn, overthrown by the Indo-Parthians, particularly by Gondophernes, in *c.* 21-50 BC who were themselves uprooted by the Kuṣāṇas in about the middle of the first century AD.[5] The Sātavāhanas were the only Indian power which presented any noteworthy resistance to the foreigners.

Sātavāhanas and the Śaka Kṣaharātas

The history of the Sātavāhanas records intermittent fighting against foreign inroads. They had to constantly face the mighty Śakas of Kṣaharāta line who had established their dominance in Western Rajputana, Gujarat, Kathiawar, Northern parts of Malwa, Konkan (Aparānta) and Maharashtra. Amidst the troubled state of affairs it was Gautamīputra Śātakarṇi who recovered the lost glory of the dynasty.[6] In a Nanaghat

[1]Raychaudhuri, *PHIA*, 3rd ed., p. 245; *A Comprehensive History of India*, II, p. 99; *AIU*, p. 97; Tripathi, *History of India*, p. 187.

[2]*Ārya-Mañjuśri-mūla-kalpa*; vide Jayaswal, *An Imperial History of India*, p. 9, VSS. 236, 248.

[3]ibid, text, p. 38, VSS. 530-32.

[4]ibid, VS. 534.

[5]*AIU*, p. 119.

[6]Smith, *EHI*, 1924, p. 245; *AIU*, pp. 196-200; *A Comprehensive History of India*, II, pp. 301-12.

Inscription he is styled as Śaka-Yavana-Pahlava-Nisūdana, i.e., the destroyer of the Scythians, Indo-Greeks, and Parthians. He is credited to have established the fame of the Sātavāhana family.[1] He uprooted the Śakas of the Kṣaharāta dynasty and defeated Nahapāna in AD 124-25.[2] According to Nasik Inscription, Gautamīputra granted some land in the eighteenth year of his reign which had been formerly possessed by the Śaka chief Ṛṣabhadatta, the son-in-law of Nahapāna, the grant being made at the time of his victorious campaigns against the Kṣaharātas.[3] In the Nasik Praśasti[4] he is described as the lord of Surāṣṭra, Kukura (in the Gujarat-Kathiawar reigon), Anūpa (the Māndhātā or Māheśvara region on the Narmada), Aparānta (Northern Konkaṇ), Ākara (East Malwa) and Avanti (West Malwa), all of which he conquered most probably from Nahapāna and his Śaka governors. He restruck Nahapāna's coins which have been found in large numbers in Jogalthembi of the Nasik district. However, he could not retain them for long, since we find that towards the end of his life the Kārdamakas of the Scythian line took them over. The Kanheri Inscription[5] speaks of a matrimonial alliance between one Vāsiṣṭhīputra Śātakarṇi, most probably the son of Gautamīputra Śātakarṇi, and the daughter of Rudradāmana. It is not unlikely that finding it difficult to retain their conquered territories, the Sātavāhanas made some diplomatic move by a marital alliance to cultivate better relations with the Kārdamaka Śakas and protect their territories.

Yajñaśrī Śātakarṇi is credited to have ousted the Scythian rule from Aparānta and probably also from parts of Western India and the Narmada valley. His silver coins found at Sopara (Sūrpāraka), the capital of Aparānta, closely resemble the silver coins of Rudradamana. Among all the Sātavāhana coins this silver type of Yajñaśrī bears on the obverse the head of the king and on the reverse it has a combination of Ujjain and hill symbols with the rayed sun. These features had been associated with the coins of Śakas of Western India. They are believed to indicate his dominance over Aparānta after uprooting the Śakas.[6] But the successors of Yajñaśrī could not maintain the integrity of the empire and it soon declined.

Vākāṭakas and their allies against the Śaka-Kṣatrapas

The Vākāṭakas played an important role in not only keeping up the spirit of Vedic revival but gave it a renewed impetus. K.P. Jayaswal, refuting Smith's theory[7] of a dark age in Indian history since the fall of the Sātavāhanas to the rise of the Guptas, built up a theory of his own that the imperial Bhāraśivas and the Vākāṭakas very successfully fill up this

[1]Nanaghat Inscription, vide *EHD*, ed. Yazdani, Pt. I-IV, pp. 116, 118.
[2]*AUI*, pp. 182, 201.
[3]Sircar, *SI*, I, p. 191 fn.
[4]ibid, pp. 196ff.
[5]Lüders no 994, also vide Sircar, *SI*, I, p. 172 fn.
[6]*A Comprehensive History of India*, II, p. 323; cf. *BMCAWK*, p. XC.
[7]Smith, *EHI*, 4th ed., pp. 290-92.

gap. He has attempted to show that the rise of the Bhāraśivas was at the cost of the Kuṣāṇa Empire. They performed not less than ten Aśvamedha sacrifices on the bank of the river Ganges, signifying 'their imperial position in Āryāvarta.'[1] He opines that the marriage between Gautamīputra, the son of Pravarasena, and the daughter of the Bhāraśiva king Bhava Nāga was a political marriage.[2] He believes that they played the central part in bringing about the fall of the Kuṣāṇa power and also the power of the Śakas.[3]

Scholars generally, however, have not found favour with Jayaswal's theory which seems to have been based on 'a priori' assumptions. The performance of Aśvamedha sacrifices does not invariably and necessarily signify great military successes, for even petty rulers like Mādhavavarman of the Viṣṇukuṇḍin line and Mayurśarmā of Kadamba line are credited to have performed eleven and eighteen Aśvamedhas respectively.[4]

Numismatic evidence shows the existence of various small powers, both foreign and native, in eastern and north-western India[5] whose emergence led to the decline of the Kuṣāṇa power. A.S. Altekar opines: "When considering the question of the disintegration of the Kushan Empire, we must .... disabuse ourselves of the notion that it was the Bhāraśiva of Kantipur who annihilated the Kushan Empire ... we find that the Yaudheyas, the Kuniṇdas, the Malavas ... all played their own part in driving out the Kushanas."[6]

However, it is to be admitted that before the rise of the Guptas the Nāgas had become a great power in Central India having their sway up to the Gangetic Valley. According to the Purāṇas, supported by numismatic and epigraphic evidence, Vidiśā, Mathura and Padmāvati were strong centres of Nāga rule. Even if we accept that they were not the only Indian rulers to give the Kuṣāṇa Empire its death blow, their rise to power was certainly at the cost of the same.[7]

The imperial status attributed to Vākāṭakas seems to be more exaggerated than real. Pravarasena I, undoubtedly, adopted the title of Samrāṭ, but to regard him an Emperor of Āryāvarta and a large portion of Southern India[8] seems to be an unduly big claim in his favour.[9] But it is highly probable that his ambition to carve out a kingdom resulted in the extension of his suzerainty over Śaka rulers of Malwa, Gujarat, and Kathiawar, his north-

[1]Jayaswal, 'History of India, 150 AD to 350 AD,' pp. 4ff. vide *JBORS*, XIX, 1933.
[2]ibid, p. 17.
[3]ibid, pp. 56-57.
[4]vide Sircar, *The Successors of the Sātavāhanas*, pp. 124f, 238f.
[5]*JNSI*, V, pp. 21-27.
[6]Altekar, *Vākāṭaka and Gupta Age*, 1960, p. 27. Chattopadhyaya, *EHNI*, p. 113; *AIU*, p. 168 fn.
[7]*A Comprehensive History of India*, II, pp. 249, 258-59.
[8]Jayaswal, 'History of India, 150 AD to 350 AD' vide *JBORS*, XIX, 1933, p. 4.
[9]*A Comprehensive History of India*, II, p. 331.

western neighbours during the first quarter of the fourth century AD.[1] The high-sounding title of Samrāṭ and the performance of four house-sacrifices[2] speak of his ambitious designs and indicate his military exploits. As Altekar is inclined to think, Pravarasena I seems to have ousted the Kṣatrapas from the Malwa region. He suggests that he may have supported the claims of the upstart Rudrasiṃha II and might have given him help to oust Bhartṛ-dāmana or his son Viśva-Siṃha or both, who were legitimate claimants to the throne.[3] He argues "one can hardly believe that Rudrasiṃha II and Yaśo-dāmana II had voluntarily remained content with the lower title of Kṣatrapa, which at that time denoted a feudatory status." The pressure of the Vākāṭaka rulers had kept the Kṣatrapas in the humble position of feudatory. It finds support from a large number of coins found at Chhimdwara in Central Province (M.P.) in which Rudrasiṃha and Yaśo-dāmana II happen to be the latest kings to be represented.[4] Thus we find that the Vākāṭakas also contributed in their limited way to the uprooting of foreign dominance and paved the way for the emergence of indigenous rule which found its most vigorous expression in the rise of the imperial Guptas.

5. The Royal Patronage of Brāhmaṇic Orthodoxy

We have seen in the preceding pages that Brāhmaṇa thinkers and law-givers envisaged a monarchical set-up in which the Varṇadharma had to be implemented and duly protected. The Śruti was accepted as the fountain-head of sacred laws which were binding on kings, ministers, judges and all other state functionaries. According to traditional polity the state was only a part of society and the king, although deified, was bound by the sanctity of traditional laws. He was the upholder of dharma and the harbinger of the general weal of the people. The establishment of the traditional laws and polity was interwoven with the patronage to orthodoxy and the Brāhmaṇas.

With the end of the Mauryan rule starts the political ascendancy of orthodox Vedism.[5] The Ayodhya Inscription of Dhanadeva refers to two horse-sacrifices performed by Puṣyamitra Śuṅga.[6] Patañjali also mentions

[1]Altekar, op. cit., p. 100; see also Mirashi, *V.V. Vākāṭaka Rājavaṃśa kā Itihāsa. . . .*, pp. 22-5.

[2]ibid, pp. 101-2.

[3]Altekar, op. cit., p. 59.

[4]ibid, p. 59.

[5]Some of the scholars had earlier forwarded the view that the Vedic revival started with the advent of the Guptas, vide Bhandarkar, *JBBRAS*, XX, pp. 356ff; Banerji, *The Age of the Imperial Guptas* (Mahendra Chandra Nandi Lecture, 1930, pp. 112ff; cf. Bhandarkar in the *Volume of Eastern and Indian Studies Presented in honour of F.W. Thomas*, pp. 29-30.

[6]*JBORS*, X, pp. 202f; cf. *Mālavikāg.*, Chowkhambha Sanskrit Series, pp. 227-28; Sircar, *SI*, I, p. 90.

the same in his *Mahābhāṣya*.[1] The office of the royal priest, abolished in Aśoka's reign, was re-established by the Śuṅgas, Patañjali being the great incumbent in Puṣyamitra's days. The *Divyāvadāna* also mentions a royal chaplain of Puṣyamitra,[2] the notices being corroborated by the Tibetan historian, Tāranātha.[3] It may be noted here that the *Harivaṃśa Purāṇa* gives an interesting account of the revival of the Aśvamedha sacrifice. It is said that after Janamejaya's sacrifice it will no more be performed by Kṣatriyas.[4] It will be revived only by a Brāhmaṇa of the Kāśyapa gotra in the Kali age,[5] the members of whose family will also perform the Rājasūya sacrifice.[6] This Brāhmaṇa 'Senānī' in all probability can be no other person than Puṣyamitra, whose followers, the Kāṇvāyanas, also were devotees of Neo-Orthodoxy. Some of them were Vaiṣṇavites while others were Śaivites.[7]

Although the Vedic culture penetrated in the South much earlier, the emergence of the Sātavāhanas gave a new impetus to Neo-Orthodoxy. The spirit of orthodox revivalism on a political plane, inaugurated by the Śuṅgas, was well kept up by the Sātavāhanas, in whose times, perhaps on account of recurrent invasions by the Greeks and Schythians, the centre of the Brāhmaṇical activities shifted to the Deccan. Important cities like Paithan and Nasik were now the throbbing centres of the Brāhmaṇas' activities.[8] However, Sātavāhanas, like most of the Indian kings were quite tolerant in their religious attitude and made considerable grants to the Buddhists and Jainas.

Śātakarṇi[9] I celebrated his political achievements by performing Aśvamedha and Rājasūya sacrifices, besides undertaking many other minor sacrifices, in which he gave large gifts to the Brāhmaṇas in cash and kind. The dakṣiṇā included 42,700 cows, 10 elephants, 1000 horses, 17 silver pots, 1 horse-chariot and 68,000 Kārṣāpaṇas.[10] A Nanaghat Inscription of first century AD. tells us that Nāyanikā, the queen of Śātakarṇi I,[11] besides sharing all the sacrifices along with her husband, worshipped Dharma, Indra, Saṅkarṣaṇa and Vāsudeva.[12] The increasing popularity of new emerging deities of Neo-Orthodoxy like Paśupati and Gaurī, Rudra and Pārvati, Nārāyaṇa and Lakṣmi is testified also by the *Gāthā Sattasaī* of Hāla.[13]

[1] *Mahābh.*, III.2.123. Var. I.
[2] *Divyā.*, p. 434.
[3] vide *supra*, pp. 210-1.
[4] *HV. P.*, III.2.35.
[5] ibid, III.2.39-40.
[6] ibid, III.2.41.
[7] Tripathi, *History of Ancient India*, 1960, p. 188.
[8] vide Banerji, *Pre-Historic, Ancient and Hindu India*, 1934, p. 134.
[9] *A Comprehensive History of India*, II, p. 301-2; *AIU*, pp. 198-99.
[10] *A Comprehensive History of India*, II, p. 302; see also *ASWI*, V, p. 60f; Sircar, *SI*, no. 82; Rapson, *BMCAWK*, CLXXXIII. n.I.
[11] *A Comprehensive History of India*, II, p. 302.
[12] vide Sircar, *SI*, I, p. 180f.
[13] *The Gāthā Saptaśatī* (Kavyamala 21) Preface, p. 9. VSS. *Gāthā*. 455, 372, 403.

However, the epic deities were still in the process of emerging as great gods in the south, for even in the second century AD Rāma (Balarāma), Keśava, alongwith the epic heroes Arjuna and Bhīmasena, are presented as only equal to Gautamīputra Śātakarṇi.[1] But the Chinna Inscription of Yajñaśrī-Śātakarṇi, belonging to the close of second century AD, begins with the worship of Vāsudeva. Thus it marks the steady elevation of that epic deity as one of the great gods. Some of the Sātavāhanas were worshippers of Śiva also. The Tāḷagunda Pillar Inscription of the Kadamba family belonging to the fifth century AD. refers to a Śiva temple in which Śātakarṇi and other kings are said to have worshipped Śiva.[2]

It is held that 'with the coming of the Āryans there occurred a revolutionary change. The earlier inhabitants either accepted the religion of the new-comers under certain limitation or retired to the forest.'[3] This, however, presents only a fraction of the truth. Brāhmaṇas' cultural activities extended to the south under the Sātavāhanas but what was the exact form of Āryan penetration in the south in this period is difficult to understand. The reassertion of the Vedas together with the revival of the Vedic sacrifices did, of course, become the order of the times, but it was only one side of the picture of the age. There were phenomenal changes in the cultural characteristics of the Vedic fold itself and in our period the term 'Ārya' comes to mean a noble or a cultured person of any one of the three classes, or even the Śūdra class at times. So the shifting of the Brāhamaṇas' activities to the south could hardly be regarded as the 'coming of the Āryans'[4] there. It is rather strange that Neo-Orthodoxy flourished in the south under kings, who, although Brāhmaṇas by caste and claim, had nāga blood in them and entertained no disgust in adopting nāga names and mentioning their descent from the mothers' side, which seems to go against their being Āryans. It is no less significant to note that although the Brāhmaṇas and the orthodox culture got all the active support of the Sātavāhanas, Sanskrit, the most important vehicle of Vedic culture, was not adopted as the State language by them.

The Brāhmaṇas in our period were as much the champions of cultural assimilation as of Vedic orthodoxy. The attempt was made to reduce the cultural tension between orthodoxy and heterodoxy. Further they tried to narrow down the differences with animistic or totemic culture by synthesizing and transforming the tribal totems, village deities, tree and serpent cults, spirit worships, magic etc. of the local people which became integral parts of Neo-Orthodoxy. But this process of assimilation and synthesization was carefully evolved to give them Vedic shades and ingeniously connect them with the orthodox deities. Thus the extension of Vedic culture in the south in this period was greatly counter-balanced by the introduction of the

[1]Sircar, op. cit., I, p. 198.
[2]*EC*, VII. SK. 176.
[3]*EHD*, ed. Yazdani, p. 140.
[4]ibid, p. 140.

elements of the pre-Vedic culture in the orthodox fold.

Besides religion, political norms and cultural values enunciated in Brāhmaṇical texts were in vogue under the Sātavāhanas. It can be plausibly accepted that the Kauṭilīya Arthaśāstra and the code of Manu became guiding principles of the state. The Nasika cave inscription says[1] that Gautamīputra Śātakarṇi 'properly divided time and place for the pursuit of the Trivaga (Trivarga)' and was mindful of the people's weal and woes[2]—ideals prescribed almost in the same words by Kauṭilya in his *Arthaśāstra*.[3] Manu also prescribes the triple values as directive principles of king's policy whose achievement brings prosperity to the kingdom.[4] Further, the Smārta injunction to protect the Varṇāśramadharma was followed by the Sātavāhanas. Gautamīputra proclaimed 'to stop the contamination of the four Varṇas.'[5] Against the background of deviations of the members of all the four Varṇas from their prescribed occupations and matrimonial laws, this championship of the orthodox social system must have been of immense importance to Neo-Orthodoxy. It shows the application of political sanctions to Varṇa order which was much sought after by the authors of our times.

As regards the Vākāṭakas, it is interesting to note that the earliest known figure of this family, Gṛhapati Vākāṭaka, was a Buddhist.[6] But Vindhyaśakti, the founder of the royal line and his successors were not only devout followers of neo-Vedism but also the champions of its cause, which proved to be of far-reaching significance. Their conversion to Neo-Orthodoxy is supposed to have been brought about by the efforts of a reputed Brāhmaṇa house of Vellur. Yajñapati of this family is credited to have introduced the orthodox religion in the Vākāṭaka kingdom and it is supposed that it was probably he who induced Vindhyaśakti to perform Vedic sacrifices.[7] Pravarasena I, the performer of Aśvamedhas, Agniṣṭoma, Ukthya, Soḍśin, Vājapeya, Ātirātra, Āptoryāma, Bṛhaspatisava etc., is styled a Paramamāheśvara, i.e., the great worshipper of Śiva.[8] He was also called Dharma Mahārāja which signifies his virtuous and righteous rule.[9] Pravarasena II was also devoted to Śiva. It is said that by the grace of the god Śiva he established Kṛtayuga, i.e., the Golden Age of righteousness, in his kingdom.[10]

The Vākāṭaka kings lavishly granted villages to Brāhmaṇas in order to promote the orthodox culture.[11] Out of eighteen land grant inscriptions of

[1]Nasik Cave Inscription, vide Sircar, op. cit., I, pp. 196-97ff.

[2]*KArth.*, I.7.8,1.7.2. and also 1. Ch. 19.

[3]ibid.

[4]*Manu*, VII.27.

[5]Sircar, op. cit., I, pp. 196-97f.

[6]*EI*, XV, p. 258; vide, Mirashi, *Vākāṭaka Rājavaṃśa kā Itihāsa. . . .*, p. 71.

[7]Ghaṭotkacha Cave Inscription of Varāhadeva, vide *ASWI*, IV, p. 138.

[8]*EI*, XXVI, p. 166. opposite side.

[9]Basim Copper Plate of Vindhyaśakti II, vide *EI*, XXIII, pp. 150-51, opp. page.

[10]Mirashi, op. cit., p. 31.

[11]Jāmba Copper Pl. of Pravarasena II vide *EI*, XXVI, pp. 155-60; Béōlrā Copper Pl. of Pravarasena II, vide *EI*, XXIV, pp. 260-67; Sivani Copper Pl. of Pravarasena II, *JBAS*,

the Vākāṭaka kings and their feudatories, only three record grants made to Buddhist order while the remaining fifteen speak of grants made to Brāhmaṇas for favour of the worship of the deities of Neo-Orthodoxy.[1] From some inscriptions it is indicated that they also undertook the constructions of temples.[2]

The Devataka Stone Inscription of Rudrasena, who was the worshipper of Śiva in his ferocious manifestation (Mahābhairava), is important in so far as it is inscribed on a slab, which previously contained an Aśokan inscription,[3] propagating a ban on animal killing. Mirashi opines that Rudrasena being a devout worshipper of Mahābhairava had not the slightest faith in Aśoka's doctrine of non-violencc and it is not amazing that he got Asoka's inscription cleared away to make place for his own.[4] This example of Brāhmaṇical reaction shows a revolutionary change in the spirit of the age, which, marked by social upheavals, foreign inroads, and disintegration of political power, was totally unfavourable to the doctrine of non-violence.

Mayūrasarmā, the founder of the Kadamba dynasty, came into power in the south in the *c.* 345 AD i.e., about twenty-five years after the rise of the Guptas. The Tāḷagunda Pillar Inscription gives a vivid account of the phenomenal rise of the Kadambas. Being oppressed by the guards of the Pallava ruler, Mayūrasarmā felt: 'Alas! in this age of Kali, Brāhmaṇhood is helpless against the Kṣatra. . . . So with his arm deft in handling Kuśa, Samidhā (fuel) and other ingredients of sacrifice, he grasped the shining weapons of war wishing to conquer the world.' He soon overwhelmed the Pallava army of the frontier in battle. The Pallava king made him commander of his army. Later on he became the ruler of the territory between the Western sea and Prehara, the Eastern limit of the Kadamba kingdom.[5] The inscription mentions helplessness of the spiritual power before the temporal power. The rise of the various Brāhmaṇa dynasties, almost all of them usurping to power through military channel, were devout champions of Neo-Orthodoxy and they led to its establishment with great zeal.

Though the Kadambas had shown enough tolerant disposition in their religious policy,[6] they were strong champions of the Neo-Orthodoxy. The Kadur

V, p. 726 E; cf. *CII*, III, p. 243; Ṛiddhapur Copper Pl. of Prabhāvatī Gupta, *JBAS*, XX, pp. 53 and 68; Mirashi, op. cit., p. 167; Pandhurna Copper Pl. of Pravarasena II, vide Mirashi, op. cit., pp. 204-11; Chammaka Copper Pl. of Pravarasena II vide *ASWI*, IV, pp. 119f; cf. *CII*, III, p. 235 E.

[1]Mirashi, op. cit., p. 75.

[2]vide *EI*, XXIV, pp. 200 and 267; vide Mirashi, op. cit., p. 72.

[3]Mirashi, op. cit., pp. 25-26, 130-33; cf. *CII*, III, p. 7.

[4]Mirashi, op. cit., pp. 25-26.

[5]*EI*, VIII, pp. 24-36; *EC*, VII, *SK*, p. 176.

[6]Pathak and once Fleet believed them to be of Jaina leaning. Fleet, "Sanskrit and Old Canarese Inscriptions," *IA*, VI, pp. 27, 29, 30, 31, 32; see also VII, pp. 35, 36, 38. But later on Fleet changed his opinion believing them to be strongly devoted to the Brāhmaṇical orthodoxy. vide Fleet, *Kanarese Dynasties*, p. 286.

Taluqa describes Viṣṇuvarmana as the 'protector of the excellent Brāhmaṇical faith.'[1] The Kadambas performed many Aśvamedha sacrifices also.[2] The later kings of this family seem to have zealously adopted the orthodox standards in social, political, and cultural domains, as we find the casual mention of Manu, Cāṇakya, Bhṛgu, Pāṇini, Vyāsa and Saṅkara in their inscriptions.[3]

With the rise of the Guptas Neo-Orthodoxy emerged as the most popular faith of the country. The Gupta kings established a wide empire. This made the spread of the Epic-Purāṇic religion possible practically all over the country. The religious policy of the Gupta was one of tolerance.[4] But they have given a great impetus to orthodox faith. They celebrated their military conquests by performing Aśvamedha sacrifices. In the Poona Copper Plate of Prabhāvatīgupta, Samudragupta is credited to have performed 'many a horse-sacrifice.'[5] This is supported by the Aśvamedha type of coins issued by him. The obverse of this type has a horse standing before a sacrificial post (Yūpa) with pennons flying back. The legend on some such coins is "Rājādhirājaḥ pṛthivīm avitvā divam jayatyaprativāryavīryaḥ" (the king of kings, having gained the earth, conquers heaven, with his irresistable heroism).[6] The reverse of this type has the chief queen standing, and among other things shown there is a sacrificial spear bound with a fillet having the legend inscribed 'Aśvamedhaparākramaḥ.' Samudragupta is described by his successors as the performer of the Aśvamedha-sacrifice 'that had been long in abeyance' and is credited to have given millions of lawfully acquired cows and golds[7] to the Brāhmaṇas. Kumāragupta also seems to have performed the Aśvamedha sacrifice.[8]

Samudragupta was the great patron of Neo-Orthodoxy. In the Allahabad Pillar Inscription he is described as associated with the learned people and held as the supporter of the scriptures.[9] It is most significant to note that he is described as 'acintya puruṣa'[10] (inscrutable being, i.e., Viṣṇu) and he is mentioned as 'the spirit that was cause of the protection of good and destruction of evil.'[11] These attributes of Samudragupta echo the content of a passage of the *Bhagavadgītā* wherein Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme God is said to incarnate himself from age to age for the protection of the virtuous and the destruction of evil-doers and for establishing Dharma on a firm

[1]*EC*, VI, Sd. 162.

[2]*EC*, VI, SK. 178; XI, MK. 41; *Dg*. 33; *IA*, VII, p. 35.

[3]*EI*, XIII, p. 237; *EC*, VIII, Sb. 225; vide Moraes, *The Kadamba-Kula*, p. 299.

[4]R.S. Tripathi, 'Religious Tolerance Under the Imperial Guptas,' vide *IHC* (Proc.), 2nd Session, 1938, pp. 63-70.

[5]*EI*, XV, p. 41.

[6]vide Sircar, *SI*, I, p. 268;

[7]Bihar Stone Inscription of Skandagupta and Bhitari Stone Pillar Inscription of Skandagupta, *CII*, III, pp. 51, 54.

[8]*CII*, III, p. 11.

[9]ibid, III, p. 11.

[10]ibid, p. 8, l. 25.

[11]ibid, p. 14.

footing.[1] He is equated with the lokapālas and is held as mortal only in performing the obligatory rites and sacrifices[2] of mankind but was otherwise a god dwelling on the earth.' Samudragupta was a devout worshipper of Viṣṇu, although the epithet Parama Bhāgavata adopted by his successors is not applied to him.[3] The attributes and the image of Samudragupta, as depicted in the Allahabad Pillar Inscription, show not only the ascendancy of the Neo-Orthodoxy but mark also the attempt made by the Brāhmaṇas to ally the Epic-Purāṇic creed with the state on a positive ground wherein the emperor seems to be the protector of the faith.[4]

Most of the Gupta kings were devout worshippers of Viṣṇu and were styled as Parama Bhāgavata. They adopted Garuḍa, the emblem or the vehicle of Viṣṇu, as a State emblem.[5] The inscriptions and the coins of the Gupta age give a fair idea of the dominance of the Epic-Purāṇic religion.[6]

6. Hinduization[7] and Assimilation of Foreign Tribes

The antagonism of the orthodox culture against foreigners and their culture had ever been a prominent feature in our period. A unique expression of this attitude is noticed in law-givers' almost half-hearted provision of ascribing to them Kṣatriyahood from which they are said to have already fallen to the level of the Śūdras. But soon the Brāhmaṇa theologians enlisted these foreign elements to the Neo-Orthodox faith. Though most of the Greeks embraced Buddhism, the Śakas were thoroughly Hinduized. Even from the rank of the Greeks, ambassador Heliodorus, as early as the second century BC, embraced the Bhāgavata faith and erected a Garuḍadhvaja in honour of the Bhāgavata deity.[8] Śaka names were Sanskritized, the Sanskrit adjective 'Mahā' being added to the Greek term Kṣatrapa to indicate them. Nahapāna adopted the title 'Rājan' on his coins[9] and was followed by many others of his class. Besides, Hinduization also became a common fact. Nahapāna names his daughter Dakṣamitrā and his son-in-law

[1] *Gītā*, IV.8.
[2] *CII*, III, p. 15; cf. *Manu*, VII.7-8.
[3] *IA*, 1912, p. 15.
[4] see Gokhale, *Samudra Gupta: Life and Times*, 1962, pp. 63ff.
[5] Sircar, op. cit., I, pp. 254ff.
[6] *JNSI*, X, p. 104; see also *CII*, III, p. 41; cf. pp. 26, 74, 202, 250, 76, 146, 180, etc.; Sircar, op. cit., I, pp. 326ff; *CII*, III, Inscription nos. 17, 19, 33, 36, 41, 42, 66, 25, 29, 31, 50, etc.
[7] Despite its currency from the early mediaeval times onwards, the term 'Hindu' appears to be quite meaningful in the context of assimilation of the foreign elements into Neo-Orthodox fold in the period of our study. Besides denoting all the sects and subsects of Epic-Purāṇic religion, the term distinguishes the missionary zeal of the Epic-Purāṇic religious circles from that of Buddhism.
[8] vide *supra*, p. 39; Sircar, *SI*, I, pp. 90-91.
[9] Rapson, *Catalogue of Indian Coins: Andhras, Western Kṣatrapas*, etc., pp. 65ff.

bore the name of Uṣabhadāta (Skt. Ṛṣabhadatta).[1] Hindu names like Vīryakamitra, Vijayamitra, Indravarman, Jayadāmana, Rurdradāmana, Jīvadāmana, Rudrasiṃha, Rudrasena, Satyadāmana, etc. became very common amongst them and they also worshipped Hindu gods like Śiva, Viṣṇu etc. They also showed reverence to the Brāhmaṇas. Usabhadāta is extolled to have granted sixteen villages to the gods and the Brāhmaṇas, facilitated the marriage of eight Brāhmaṇas and to have annually fed one hundred thousand of them.[2] Rudradāmana earnestly adhered to the typical Brāhmaṇical ideal of the attainment of 'trivarga,' viz. Dharma, Artha and Kāma. He is also said to have endeavoured to study the arthavidyā, i.e., the orthodox polity.[3] He obtained great fame by studying and retaining the knowledge and practice of grammar, music, logic and other great lores.[4] He is also said to have shown great reverence for cows and Brāhmaṇas.[5] These are definite points that a positive approach was made to assimilate these foreign people into the orthodox society, whose acceptance of them is borne out by the fact that Vāsiṣṭhīputra Śātakarṇi accepted the daughter of Rudradāmana as his legally married queen.[6]

The Ābhīras, originally styled as Dasyus,[7] were also Hinduized. They also adopted Hindu names like Īśvarasena, Śivadatta[8] etc. It was in the community of the Ābhīras that the worship of baby Kṛṣṇa was mostly prevalent.

Like the Ābhīras, the Scythians also seem to have accepted the popular faiths of Neo-Orthodoxy. Some of the Indian coins even of the Indo-Greeks like Pantaleon and Agasthocles bear the figure of a dancing girl which is suggested to be the image of Lakṣmī.[9] Of the Śaka rulers, the figures of Śiva appear in some of the copper coins of Maues, Gaja-Lakṣmī on those of Azilises and Durgā-Pārvatī on those of the Azes[10] II. Among the Indo-Parthians, some of the coins of Gondophares are said to have contained the figure of Śiva.[11] The legend 'Devavrata' or 'Sudevavrata' found on some of his coins would have us believe that he was a Śaivite by faith.[12]

[1]vide *JRAS*, 1906, p. 211; Nasik nos. 11, 13, 18 and 26; *EI*, VIII; Karle nos. 7 and 10; see also VI. Andhra Inscription, *EI*, XVI, pp. 23ff; Sankalia, *Studies in the Historical and Cultural Geography and Ethnography of Gujarat*, Poona, 1949, pp. 104ff, 112.

[2]vide Sircar, op. cit., pp. 165-66; cf. Karle nos. 7, 10, 13; Nasik nos. 10, 12; vide *EI*, VIII.

[3]Nasik no. 10; *EI*, VIII, p. 446; Junagadha Rock Inscription, vide Sircar, op. cit., p. 172.

[4]vide *EI*, VIII, p. 44. L. 13.

[5]Junagarh Inscription of Rudradāmana (*c.* 150 AD), vide Sircar, op. cit., I, p. 174.

[6]Kanheri Cave Inscription vide *ASWI*, V, p. 78.

[7]*Viṣ. P.*, V.38.13-15.

[8]*EI*, IX, p. 280.

[9]*A Comprehensive History of India*, II, ed. Nilakanta Sastri, p. 783.

[10]Banerjea, *DHI*, pp. 111, 120-21, 135.

[11]Banerjee, *DHI*, pp. 118-19; vide *A Comprehensive History of India*, II, p. 787.

[12]Gardner, *The Coins of the Greeks and Scythic Kings of Bactria and India in the British Museum*, Introduction p. lviii.

Of the Kūṣanas, Wima Kadphises seems to have imbibed the Neo-Orthodox culture. Some of his coins bear the figure of Śiva and show the bull and the trident, i.e. the battle-axe associated with divinity. The legend Mahiśvara (Māheśvara or Pāśupata) also occurs there. Some of his other coins bear on the reverse the Kharoṣṭhī legend 'maharajasa rajadhiraja Vima Kathphiśasa' while others have it as 'maharajasa rajadhirajasa sarva-loka iśvarasa mahiśvarasa Vima Kathphiśasa Tradara,' obviously in their Prākrit forms. These coins testify to his conversion to the Śaiva faith.[1] The coins of Huviṣka bear, besides other non-orthodox deities, the figures of Śiva, his consort Umā, their son, Skanda or Kumāra, Viśākha, Mahāsena together with various associate emblems and attributes of Śiva.[2] It is to be noted that Huviṣka's successor bore the typical Hindu deity's name Vāsudeva. The successors of Huviṣka had the figure of Śiva on some of their coins.[3]

Scholars are of the opinion that the diversity of creed represented on the Kuṣāṇa coins, especially of Kaniṣka, shows that they were not of Brāhmaṇical faith.[4] But it is to be noted that the Brāhmaṇic way of religious propagation was a silent process of acculturation and assimilation rather than formal conversion of the people to any sect. The coin devices of some of the Kuṣāṇas show not only the influence of Neo-Orthodoxy on them but also bring out the fact that kings like Wima had been devout Śaivites. Even, Kaniṣka, one of the greatest champions of Buddhism, adopts Śiva as the motif in some of his coins. It indicates the steady progress of the Śaiva cult which later got its most vigorous expression under the Guptas.

It is a fact that despite spirited attempts of native rulers foreign inroads could not be checked. The failure of military power left the problem to be tackled by the social leaders—law-givers and theologians. The puritan inhibitions of the social law-givers, however, could hardly allow them to amicably absorb the incoming foreigners into the orthodox fold. But ingenious as their methods were, the Varṇa-barriers and denial of Vedic rites were substituted by Neo-Orthodoxy whose new emerging sects heartily welcomed the foreigners to the ever wide Hindu fold.

7. Brāhmaṇas as Ministers and State Officials

Brāhmaṇas as royal chaplains were inseparably associated with kingship right from the Vedic period. With the emergence of big kingdoms and empires from *c.* sixth century BC onwards developed many new political institutions

[1] *A Comprehensive History of India,* II, pp. 232-33, 788-89; See also Ravindra Kumar Siddhantashastree, *Śaivism Through the Ages,* Delhi, 1975, p. 99.

[2] Gardner, op. cit., Pls. XXVII, XXVIII, Figs. 16, 22, 24; vide Banerjea, op. cit., pp. 123-24, 136-37, 145.

[3] *A Comprehensive History of India,* II, pp. 788ff.

[4] *IA,* 1888, pp. 89; *JRAS,* 1912, pp. 981ff; see also, Bhandarkar, *Carmichael Lectures on Ancient Indian Numismatics,* Calcutta, 1921, pp. 14-21.

which required large numbers of state officials with responsibilities to discharge secular duties Brāhmaṇas, in their relations to the state, were no more concerned only with ritualistic responsibilities.

Authors on polity invariably enjoin upon the king to carry on the administration of the state with the help of ministers.[1] The qualifications of ministers laid down by these authors suit mostly the upper classes and the attainments of the Brāhmaṇas particularly size up to them. Kauṭilya says that an ideal minister should be a native of the country born of a high family, influencial, well-trained in arts, possessed of foresight, wise, strong in memory, bold, eloquent, skilful, intelligent, possessed of enthusiasm, dignity and endurance, pure in character, affable, endowed with excellent strength, health and bravery, free from procrastination and fickle-mindedness and such qualities as excite hatred and enmity.[2] Manu prescribes the appointment of seven or eight ministers (*Saciva*) 'whose ancestors have been royal servants, who are versed in the sciences, skilled in the use of weapons, descended from noble families and who have been tried.'[3] Not very great emphasis is put on military qualities.[4] Like Kauṭilya, Kauṇapadanta and Bahudantiputra laid great emphasis on noble birth and the moral character of the minister.[5] Kauṭilya, in spite of his secular approach, supports the orthodox social system and presents the Brāhmaṇas in the conventionally dominant position. Kangle, reviewing the provisions of Kauṭilya, says: "Apart from the Purohita, who normally may be supposed to exercise a wonderful power on the ruler, most of the mantrins if not all, were also drawn from this (Brāhmaṇa) class.'[6] It is rightly pointed out that 'the commonest Sanskrit word for ministers, mantrin, means the possession of a magic formula, which implies a Brāhmaṇa.'[7] One of the most essential qualities of a Brāhmaṇa was that he should possess a mantra. It is said in the *Mahābhārata* that "as a eunuch cannot beget children on women, as a cow does not procreate on another cow, as a bird does live in vain that is featherless, even so is a Brāhmaṇa that is without 'Mantra."[8] In this passage 'mantra' may mean only magical formula or sacred hymns, but the formation 'mantrin' from 'mantra' establishes beyond doubt that he (*mantrin*) belonged, in general, to the Brāhmaṇa class. That the ambassadors (*dūtas*) were also recruited mostly from this class is suggested by a statement of Kauṭilya wherein an ambassador, when threatened with capture or imprisonment by the enemy, is advised to save himself by the argument that "even the lowest-born, among

[1] *KArth.*, I.15.11; *Manu*, VII.30-31, 54-57; *Yāj.*, I.308-9; cf. *GDS*, XI.4; *ŚNS*, II.204.
[2] *KArth.*, I.9.1, I.9.2-10; cf. *Mbh.*, XII. chs. 83-6.
[3] *Manu*, VII.54; cf. *Yāj.*, I.311.
[4] Altekar, *State and Government in Ancient India*, Banaras, 1949, p. 131.
[5] vide *KArth.*, I.8.
[6] Kangle, *Kauṭilīya Arthaśāstra*, Pt. III, p. 145.
[7] Kosambi, Vide *JABBRAS*, XXII, 1946, p. 47.
[8] *Mbh.*, XII.37.40.

ambassadors must not be killed, what to speak then of Brāhmaṇas?"[1] Manu enjoins upon the king to decide his policy after due consultation with the most learned Brāhmaṇa.[2] Almost the same view is expressed by Yājñavalkya.[3] Apart from these explicit statements of the law-givers, the qualifications laid down for ministers indicate that 'Smṛtis prefer that ministerial appointments should normally go to Brāhmaṇas."[4] Kauṭilya declares that 'the king who is supported by a Brāhmaṇa, who has the advantage of the advice of other mantrins, and who is governed by the Śāstras, conquers territories unconquered before.'[5]

Brāhmaṇas in State Administration

Brāhmaṇas as ministers and councillors played an important role in the political life of ancient India. According to the *Kāśikā Vṛtti* the term 'miśra' in *Aṣṭādhyāyī* (VI.2.154) signifies an agreement between the king and the Brāhmaṇa regarding State administration, and the term 'Paṇa-bandha-Sandhi' marks their joint and unanimous commitment to the laws of Dharma.[6] Again, the term 'Ārya-Brāhmaṇa,' noble or honourable Brāhmaṇa, is an honorific of the Brāhmaṇa minister who performs Kṣatriya-like functions.[7] Kālidāsa also presents the king addressing his minister as 'Ārya.'[8] Another term 'Rāja-Brāhmaṇa' probably denotes the Brāhmaṇas in high state offices.[9] We have already seen how in the *Mahābhārata* there is a mention of the Kṣatriya-like Brāhmaṇas who were employed in state administration.[10]

As Brāhmaṇas took up political functions in the state administration in large numbers a class of secular Brāhmaṇas came into existence. Jayaswal rightly observes: "It is only in the days of the Buddha that we find Brahmins taking to political public life--a change due probably to the growing dissatisfaction among the learned and intellectual class against the priestly vocation, and also to a growth in population."[11] Apart from these causes, the growth of bigger kingdoms with extensive state control over diverse walks of public life, as is clearly represented in the Kauṭilyan *Arthaśāstra,* seems also to have led to the secularization or democratization of the Brāhmaṇa class which took up various non-ritualistic functions. The Buddhist sources make frequent references to Brāhmaṇas working as state officials, ministers, councillors etc. These contra-ideal types of Brāhmaṇas are classified as worldly Brāhmaṇas against the Brāhmaṇas

[1]*KArth.*, I.16.17-18; cf. *Manu*, VII.63-66.
[2]*Manu*, VII.58-59; cf. *ŚNS*, II.111-112.
[3]*Yāj.*, I.311. [4]Altekar, op. cit., p. 132.
[5]*KArth.*, I.9.17.
[6]*Kāśikā* on Pāṇini, VI.2.145. ed. Ananta Sastri Phadake, Banaras, 1931.
[7]vide Kāśikā Vṛtti on Pāṇini, VI.2.58.
[8]*Śākuntala*, p. 198; vide B.S. Upadhyaya, *India in Kālidāsa*, Kitabistan, Allahabad, 1947, p. 126.
[9]*Kāśikā* on Pāṇini, VI.2.145; VI.2.59.
[10]vide *supra*, p. 131.
[11]Jayaswal, 'Revised Notes on the Brahmin Empire,' vide *JBORS*, 1918, IV, p. 262.

properly pursuing their traditional duties.[1] They took leading parts in politics and enjoyed a considerable share of the political power. This type of Brāhmaṇas, like the Kṣatriyas and Vaiśyas or Gahapatis, was known as Mahāsāla. They were quite ambitious and hoarded enormous wealth[2] some times.

Learned Brāhmaṇas were employed by kings to interpret controversial points of law, custom, and Dharma. The Jātaka stories refer to Brāhmaṇas who worked as Amāccas (Amātyas), Mahāmāttas (Mahāmātras), Dūtas (ambassadors), Senāpatis, Issatthas or Yoddhājīvas (soldiers).[3] According to the *Mahāparinibbāna Suttu* Ajātaśatru had two Brāhmaṇa ministers, Sunīdha and Vassakāra, the latter being the more celebrated one. Dīrgha Kārāyaṇa was the minister of the king of Kośala,[4] and Yaugandharāyāṇa that of Udayana.[5] His counterpart had the Brāhmaṇa minister, Śālaṅkāyana, who, successfully served his master Pradyota Mahāsena of Vatsa.[6] The greatest of the Brāhmaṇa ministers was Viṣṇugupta Cāṇakya alias Kauṭilya, a great master of the science and craft of politics. One of the concluding stanzas of the *Arthaśāstra* would have us believe that this treatise was composed by the same person who rescued the Śāstras, the weapons, and the land possessed by the Nanda kings.[7]

We have already seen how Kauṭilya, though a positivist and a great champion of monarchy, gave a place of honour to the Varṇāśramadharma and orthodox religious system.[8] He seems to have been harsh to the heterodox sects since he prescribes various sanctions against non-orthodox ascetic orders.[9] It is no wonder that the Buddhist tradition treats him contemptuously. In the *Ārya-Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa* it is said that 'Cāṇakya, successful in wrath, was Death (Yamāntaka) when angry.' Rādhāgupta was another important Maurya minister, who was probably a descendant of Viṣṇugupta Cāṇakya. His powers over the kings and state matters are amply testified to by the Buddhist sources.[10] All these examples of Brāhmaṇa ministers, however, are of a period anterior to our own. But they serve to underline the tradition of Brāhmaṇa ministers, which was regularly maintained in our period too. The Brāhmaṇa prime minister of

[1]Fick, *SONEIBT*, pp. 192-93.

[2]*Saṃ. Nik.*, Pt. I, p. 71; *Aṅg. Nik.*, Pt. IV, p. 104, 130, 239; *Dīg. Nik.*, II, p. 416; *Dhonasākha Jāt.*, III, no. 353, p. 159; *Nalinikā Jāt.*, V, pp. 193, 227.

[3]Fick, op. cit., pp. 221-23, 240-42; cf. *Ṭhāṇāṅga*, VII.558; *Dhonasākha Jāt.*, III.353; *Vidhurapaṇḍita Jāt.*, VI, p. 262; vide also *Dhammapada*, VS.290; *Paramatthajotikā*, II, p. 213; Fick, op. cit., pp. 142ff.

[4]vide Bhagavaddatta, *History of India*, p. 258.

[5]Bhāsa, *Svapnavāsavadatta, Pratijñāyaugandharāyaṇa nāṭakā*.

[6]ibid, II.V.6; see also Act, I, pp. 10-11; act. II.

[7]*KArth.*, XV.1.

[8]vide Sharma, *APIIAI*, pp. 143ff.

[9]vide *supra*, p. 190.

[10]*Divyā.*, pp. 430f; Refer to Jayaswal, *HP*, 1943, p. 290; cf. Ghoshal, *Studies in the Indian History and Culture*, pp. 296-99.

Pravarasena I was virtuous, learned and energetic. The Ghaṭotkaccha Cave Inscription while tracing his genealogy speaks of the mixture of Kṣatriya blood from the female side in the family. The prime minister was extolled to have induced the king and the whole of the kingdom to undertake religious performances. The members of this family were very tolerant and made large gifts to the Buddhists and constructed a cave monastery for them.[1] Very often the Brāhmaṇa officials and ministers, besides being quite adept in holding their ministerial responsibilities, were distinguished men of letters, e.g. Kauṭilya and Patañjali.

8. Brāhmaṇas in Military Service

The occupational scheme of the orthodox social system does not approve of Brāhmaṇas taking to the profession of arms. But there is evidence that they some times followed this profession. Baudhāyana refers to the Brāhmaṇas of the North who, like other people, subsisted by the profession of arms.[2] Āpastamba exhorts the king to appoint the members of the upper three classes, who are pure and truthful, over villages and towns for the protection of the people.[3] Kauṭilya contradicts the opinion of earlier authors on polity that Brāhmaṇas also should be recruited to the army,[4] which, by implication, shows that they were engaged in military services. The *Mahābhārata* states that those Brāhmaṇas, who were fond of sensual pleasure, fiery, irascible, prone to violence, who had foresaken their duty, and were red-limbed, fell into the conditions of Kṣatriyas.[5] Consoling Yudhiṣṭhira, Vyāsa gives a tradition that eightyeight thousand Veda knowing Brāhmaṇas, known as Śālavṛkas, armed themselves to help the Dānavas against the Devas, but they were all killed by gods for their stupified pride.[5] All these references establish the fact that the possibility of Brāhmaṇas taking up arms in large numbers could well be accepted without their being dissociated from the Vedic or orthodox tradition. Further, the Epic tradition speaks very highly of the achievements of Ācāryas like Droṇa, Kṛpa, and Aśvatthāmā, to whom the Epic heroes owed all their skill in military arts and sciences. All the Brāhmaṇa dynasties of our period established their rule by virtue of their military power. They must have been distinguished soldiers and gallant fighters who were elevated to the positions of military commanders, which became the most handy in their successful usurpation of political power. Some Jātaka stories also

[1]The Cave Inscription of Varāhadeva Ghaṭotkaccha vide *ASWI*, IV, p. 138; Mirashi, *Vākāṭaka Rājavaṃśa kā Itihāsa*. . . . , pp. 265-74.

[2]*BDS*, I.1.2.4.

[3]*ĀDS*, II.10.26.4; vide also, *SBE*, II, pp. 161-62.

[4]*KArth.*, IX.2.

[5]*Mbh.*, XII.181.10ff.

[6]*Mbh.*, XII.34.16-17; BE. XII.33.28-29. The *Vāyu Purāṇa* also mentions the army of the Brāhmaṇas, see Patil, *Cultural History from the Vāyu Purāṇa*, pp. 74-75.

describe some Brāhmaṇas as Senāpatis and Yodhājīvīs.[1] The Purāṇas, like the Dharmaśāstras, allow the Brāhmaṇas to take up arms under certain circumstances.[2] Accordingly, they could hold the high ranks of commanders of the army.[3] This tradition continued well up to the early medieval period when we find many Brāhmaṇas engaged in the profession of arms.[4]

Besides, the Brāhmaṇas appear as feudal lords also. Huge land grants made to them for the temple services became an important factor leading to the emergence of feudal system in ancient India. Exemption from revenue, transfer of administrative and judicial functions to the donee, started a typical vassal-lord relationship by *c.* 1st. century AD.[5] It seems that the disintegration of the centralised Mauryan administration and weakening of the Kauṭilyan spirit of rigid state control over land, as found in *Manusmṛti*, marks the development of feudal tendencies.[6] The inscriptions[7] of the Gupta age show many Brāhmaṇas as feudal lords. The feudal tendency became stronger in the later period, as such land grants continued to be made by kings of the subsequent times.[8] The royal patronage accorded to the Brāhmaṇas, followed by lands grants to them, led to the far and wide distribution of the Brāhmaṇas which, in its own turn, was helpful in realization of Brāhmaṇical aims of acculturation of the people[9] in remote areas beyond the ideal Madhyadeśa. With the ascendency of the feudal system,[10] the Varṇāśramadharma got consolidated.

9. Legal Justification of Brāhmaṇas' Rule and Profession of Arms

Brāhmaṇas' political rule and their resort to the profession of arms amounted to flagrant violations of the sacred laws, to which they were exhorted by their own scriptures and traditions to scrupulously adhere.

[1]*Paramatthajotikā*, II, p. 213; See also Sharma, *Brahmins Through the Ages*, pp. 125-26.
[2]*Vāyu P.*, 88.7; *Vis. P.*, IV.19.40; *Mat. P.*, 44.37.
[3]*Mat. P.*, 215.10; *Ag. P.*, Ch.220.1.
[4]cf. *IB*, III, pp. 12, 33, 37; *EI*, IV, p. 158; *IA*, XXV, p. 205; *IHQ*, 1928, p. 35; lines 44-45; Bose, *History of the Candellas*, Calcutta, 1956, pp. 74-75 fn; Prabodhacandrodaya I.3; I.6-7; *EI*, II, p. 106; IV, p. 314; I, p. 220; *Rājataraṅgiṇi*, VIII.472, 1013, 1071, 1073, 1345, 1440.
[5]*ASWI*, IV, pp. 107-8; *EI*, VIII, p. 67; Sircar, *SI*, I, pp. 188, 192, 194-95, 422, 11, 26-29; see also Sharma, *Indian Feudalism*, *c.* 300-1200, Calcutta, 1965, pp. 2-5, pp. 6ff.
[6]vide G.L. Adhya, *Early Indian Economics*, pp. 25ff.
[7]*CII*, III, pp. 38-39, 40-41, 67, 72, 75, 78-79, 82-83, 85-86, 89, 90, 116, 157, 170; *EI*, XXI, p. 61; *JBBROS*, (New Series), I, pp. 69-70, 75.
[8]*Harṣacarita*, pp. 199f; see also Ray, *The Dynastic History of Northern India*, I, p. 52.
[9]Sharma, '*Early Indian Feudalism* (*c.* AD 400-1200).' vide Problems of Historical Writings in India, Pub. India International Centre, New Delhi, p. 74.
[10]For the general tendency of the Feudal Society see Gideon Sjoberg, 'Folk and Feudal Societies,' vide *Political Development and Social Change*, ed., Finkle and Gable, New York, 1966, pp. 45ff; see also, March Bloch, *Feudal Society*, I, pp. 88ff, II, pp. 283ff.

Puṣyamitra's coup inaugurates an era of Brāhmaṇic political rule which coincides with vigorous Brāhmaṇic activities in the cultural fields also. Despite frequent breaks due to foreign inroads, these activities seem to have made steady progress under royal patronage. K.P. Jayaswal, with reference to the Śuṅgan Coup, cites some passages of the Manusmṛti and tries to prove that Manu attempted to justify or defend the Brāhmaṇas' rule.[1] Manu enjoins: "The post of the Commander-in-Chief and the king, the very Headship of Government, the complete empire over everyone, are deserved by the knower of the Vedas."[2] K.P. Jayaswal connects this passage with the following passages wherein Manu asserts: "He (Brāhmaṇa) alone, and no other man, knows the sacred law, who explores the (utterances) of the Sages and the body of laws, by (modes of) reasoning, not repugnant to the Veda-lore."[3] The learned scholar further opines: "We have here now the amazing advocacy of the Brāhmaṇa claim to become Senāpati, to obtain the kingdom, to be the ruler and the emperor.... the claim in reproducing the precedence established by Puṣyamitra Śuṅga in recent history."[4] Accordingly, Manu's injunction that the 'knower of the Vedas throws off the taint of his deeds, as a powerful fire destroys even green trees,' seeks to put forward an expiation of the sinful act of Puṣyamitra's regicide and the killing of Buddhists.[5]

We, undoubtedly, find in Manu, as never before, a militant assertion of the claims of Brāhmaṇic superiority and that of the authority of the Vedas. But the interpretations of K.P. Jayaswal, despite the fact that they fit in the general setting of the historical events of the times, do not carry conviction with us. We have to take into account the universal advocacy of the traditional Varṇa obligations by all the contemporary authors, Manu himself being the foremost champion of the orthodox social system. He nowhere explicitly supports Brāhmaṇas taking up the profession of arms or their usurpation of political power. The interpretations of Jayaswal are based just on the co-relation of a few passages which militate in spirit against the majority of the passages, forbidding the Brāhmaṇas from military professions and instead, seeking to reserve them unequivocally for the Kṣatriyas. Manu's contention that only the knower of the Vedas deserves the post of Commander-in-Chief and headship of the State may more plausibly be taken as a reassertion of traditional Vedism which seeks to prescribe some knowledge of the Vedas to king and state officials, including the Senāpati. His assertion that only the Brāhmaṇa is the knower of the Vedas seems hardly applicable to Puṣyamitra Śuṅga, who, though being the greatest champion of orthodoxy, is nowhere mentioned as a master of any appreciable Vedic learning. It is difficult to

[1]Jayaswal, *Manu and Yājñavalkya*, 1930, Introduction, p. XXIII.
[2]*Manu*, XII.100.
[3]*Manu*, XII.106; cf. XII.108-9.
[4]Jayaswal, op. cit., p. 33.
[5]Jayaswal, op. cit., p. 33.

believe that Manu seeks to establish the supremacy of the Brāhmaṇas in temporal matters, when he says that they are the lords of the world.[1] He seems to have claimed Brāhmaṇas' supremacy only in spiritual matters by saying that a Brāhmaṇa was not only the source of 'Dharma'[2] and 'god'[3] on earth, but the whole world and even the gods prosper and owe their origin to him.[4] Manu, undoubtedly, asserts in a passage that the power of the Brāhmaṇa is greater than that of the king and the former could punish his foes by his power alone.[5] But the following passages make it quite clear as to what were those powers and weapons. Brāhmaṇas' power, according to him, was derived from sacred texts revealed by Atharvan and Aṅgiras, and speech was his weapon.[6] It clearly shows that the supremacy claimed for the Brāhmaṇas was sought to be established only in ritual and spiritual matters, rather than temporal or political spheres.

We should not forget that, apart from his assertion of Brāhmaṇas' supremacy, Manu was the greatest champion of the orthodox tradition too. Any attempt on his part to justify the Brāhmaṇas' political rule would have militated against the traditional social system, which invariably assigns the profession of arms and political rule to the Kṣatriya class. The Brāhmaṇa law-givers dogmatically asserted the traditional class divisions and laid down that the duties and occupations typical to one class shall not be generally followed by others.

Āpaddharma: Provision for Cultural Crisis

Deviations from prescribed obligations of traditional nature were, however, problems of the orthodox society, which had to be faced by its legists. While providing laws to regulate the functions of the social classes they could not blind themselves to existing facts. Without allowing a certain degree of latitude to meet deviant situations, it would have been impossible to enforce the social laws. To meet this situation the theory of Āpaddharma was evolved, whose provisions were constituted for two types of crisis, i.e. Personal Distress and the Cultural Crisis.[7]

The Āpaddharma in Cultural Crisis was allowed to meet any crisis affecting all the classes in general. Situations could be created in which grave threats or positive challenges to religious and social institutions might prove disruptive to the very existence of the traditional set-up of culture. Such a Cultural Crisis arose in our period in the wholesale degeneration of the orthodox culture brought about by antagonistic forces, as

[1]*Manu*, IX.245; I.93.
[2]*Manu*, I.89-99.
[3]*Manu*, IX.317.
[4]ibid, IX.316.
[5]*Manu*, XI.32.
[6]*Manu*, XI. 33.
[7]To the Vedic social circles, especially the orthodox Brāhmaṇas, a grave calamity to the Varṇāśramadharma and a serious threat to the Vedic faith, as we find prevailing from *c*. 2nd century BC onwards, must have amounted to a 'Cultural Crisis.'

delineated in the Kali age descriptions. That kings, intellectuals, and the orthodox community were all obsessed by the problem, is evidenced in the Śānti Parva of the *Mahābhārata* where a long discourse on the Āpaddharma laws occurs and covers as many as forty-two chapters of the Epic (*Mbh.* XII.131 to 173). The role of kings in such adverse times of emergency is considered to be extremely vital. Bhīṣma declares to Yudhiṣṭhira that setting in of Kṛta, Tretā, Dvāpara, and Kali depends on the king's conduct,[1] especially when the country is invaded by some enemy.[2]

Our authors generally deprive the non-Kṣatriya classes from the right of following the profession of arms in normal times. They are strongly against Brāhmaṇas[3] taking it up. It is only in abnormal times that Brāhmaṇas and Vaiśyas are allowed to take up arms. Baudhāyana says: "For the protection of cows, Brāhmaṇas, or in case of the confusion of the Varṇas, Brāhmaṇas and Vaiśyas also should take up arms out of consideration for 'Dharma.'[4] Gautama allows the same when there is a danger to life.[5] Vasiṣṭha permits it in two cases, viz. that of danger to life and 'invasion upon Varṇa.'[6] Manu visualizes the emergent situations rather more vividly. He ordains: "Twice-borns should take up arms in the circumstances of the Dharma being obstructed and a revolution (Viplava) of the twice-born castes in evil time."[7] Manu thus makes the provision to meet the challenge to orthodox social and religious systems which should be encountered, if necessary, by the twice-born classes by taking up arms even.[8] His allowance of military pursuits in defence of Dharma should be viewed in its historical setting of heterodox movements, foreign invasions and Śudra upsurge, which characterized his times. Authors like him must have been overwhelmed by a sense of emergency created by the contemporary cultural crises, with the result that the possibility of political rule by the Brāhmaṇa class is discussed and held legal in the *Mahābhārata*. It is pointedly asked 'if the Kṣatriyas become decadent and the country is dominated by the Dasyus (foreigners)[9] and confusion of castes ensues consequential on their rule, could a non-Kṣatriya undertake to drive them out and assume kingship and under these circumstances, could he, a Brāhmaṇa, Vaiśya or Śudra, be a lawful sovereign, or does he remain under the disability imposed by the Dharmasāstra?[10] In answer, the *Mahābhārata* would make such a king a lawful sovereign.[11]

[1] *Mbh.*, XII.139.10.
[2] ibid, XII.131.4-6.
[3] *ĀDS*, I.10.29.6; Gautama as cited in *BDS*, II.2.4.17.
[4] *BDS*, II.2.4.18.
[5] *GDS*, VII.25.
[6] *VDS*, III.24.
[7] *Manu*, VIII.348; see also VIII.349.
[8] Jayaswal, op. cit., p. 36.
[9] Dasyu is defined as a foreign tribe, vide *Mbh.*, BE VI.5.31; cf. *Manu*, X.45.
[10] *Mbh.*, XII.79.12-15; ibid, XII.79.35.
[11] XII.79.43; XII.79.36.

There is another strange provision that 'when all the Kṣatriyas stand against the Brāhmaṇas and their Vedas,[1] the Brāhmaṇas should vanquish Kṣatriyas by penance, by Brahmacarya by weapons, and by (physical) power, applied with or without the help of deceit.'[2]

These provisions under the law of emergency seen against the background of heterodox revolutions, dominating the times of Aśoka, and, subsequent foreign invasions causing the emergence of Kali conditions, seek to justify not only the political rule of the Brāhmaṇas alone but rather that of the Vaiśyas and even the Śūdras if they upheld the cause of 'Dharma.' Jayaswal opines in this regard that 'such a discussion could not have arisen before the decay of the Kṣatriya power in India which was a little before Alexander's time." He says: "Mauryas as Śūdras[3] and the Śuṅgas as Brahmins, both extremes, had taken up such position between 325 and 188 BC. Both had succeeded against the 'Dasyus' and both in the beginning were orthodox.'[4]

Thus we find that the laxity allowed under this category of Āpaddharma was designed to meet the situation in emergency created by the menace to the indigenous culture—some thing far nobler than laxity of occupations allowed on account of personal distress, which eventually operated to reify the Varṇa-structure. The duty of protection of the people and of Dharma, thus, open to all the Varṇas, explains and justifies Brāhmaṇas' political rule. It cannot be, however, ascertained as to how far the Brāhmaṇas' usurpation of political power was strictly justified under the provisions of Āpaddharma. It might have also been motivated by personal ambition and the spirit of adventure. The Tāḷagunda Pillar Inscription[5] of the Kadambas quite explicitly speaks that the Brāhmaṇas' bid for power was made due to a sense of the loss of authority of the Vedas under the Kali situations. This might have been true of other Brāhmaṇical powers as well, the Śuṅgas not excluded.

[1] *Mbh.*, XII.79.18-21.
[2] ibid, XII.79.20.
[3] vide *supra*, pp. 199-200.
[4] Jayaswal, op. cit., p. 36.
[5] vide *supra*, p. 219.

Chapter 9

CONCLUSION

We can conclude on the basis of our foregoing study that the period of Indian history from *c.* 200 BC to AD 500, i.e., roughly from the fall of the Mauryas to the end of the imperial Guptas, was an age of a great cultural upheaval in the Vedic fold. The grave challenge to the Vedic orthodoxy started after the disintegration of the Mauryan empire but a parallel process of social and religious reconstruction soon gained momentum in the orthodox fold which lasted well up to the Gupta times. The threefold Challenge of heterodoxy, the foreign inroads followed by large settlements of the outlandish people in northern India, and the pressure of non-Varṇa people, which apparently brought about the cultural upheaval, was looked down upon by the orthodox circles. The rise of non-orthodox Bhāgvatism and Śaivism also posed a serious problem to the orthodox divines of the Vedic fold. Besides, the accounts of Kali age tradition betray the nature of the impact of the general economic transformation on the Vedic society in our times which was greatly disturbing the time-honoured cultural norms and values.

An enormous body of myths, legends, episodes, illustrations, and, dicta depicted in the Epics and the Purāṇas provides us positive evidence of inseparable involvement of the Brāhmaṇas in the cultural transformations of our times. The Brāhmaṇa theologians played a vital role in evolving an Epic-Purāṇic religion of a composite character. Naturally, as the acclaimed custodians of the Vedic orthodoxy, the Brāhmaṇas had to face the most trying situation in preserving the orthodox culture and, at the same time, readjusting the tradition in order to reconcile it with the emerging forces of the time. As 'the disintegration of culture is the most serious and the most difficult to repair,'[1] the Vedic orthodoxy in general, and the Brāhmaṇas in particular, were put to a serious trial as never before. Our study of the Brāhmaṇas' role against the background of these antagonistic forces not only exposes their deep concern about the cultural disruption, but brings out also their intensive activities aimed at giving the cultural

[1]Elliot, *Notes Towards the Definition of Culture*, London, 1962, p. 26.

changes a systematized shape and proper direction. The Brāhmaṇas appear in the literature of our age as theologians of rare imagination and resolute purpose, kneading the various strata of religious traditions of worships and beliefs into a systematized theology of popular note. The vehement upsurge of the Agamic cult worships, as known from the Brāhmaṇical literature of the age, testifies to the strenuous attempts of the Brāhmaṇas to revitalize the orthodox fold by assimilating the popular faiths which brought vast masses to the Vedic pale.[1] In a limited sense this seems to have been rather a process of democratization of the orthodox cultural tradition, although the process of synthesis also shows an attempt at placing the Vedic deities in a dominant position. The Brāhmaṇas did not propound any altogether new faith of their own. As religious thinkers and theologians, they set in a process of cultural transformation which can be described as one of identification and assimilation, synthesization and evolution, omission and assertion of various Vedic and non-Vedic religious elements. The Vedic attributes of Viṣṇu are ascribed to Vāsudeva-Kṛṣṇa in the *Mahābhārata* and the Purāṇas while Nārāyaṇa[2] is identified with both of them. The Ekāntika dedication to Nārayaṇa and the Sātvata rite (Vidhi) appear to be of immense technical importance, but their original significance is now almost untraceable. However, both these systems, as is the case also with Vyuha doctrine, are thoroughly transformed into the Bhakti tenets of Vaiṣṇava sect.

The theologians' attempt to transform Śaivism into an orthodox sect does not seem to be wholly successful. Despite this fact, the heterogeneous attributes of Rudra-Śiva were convenient enough to the Epic-Puraṇic divines in their task of integrating innumerable deities of demonic character,[3] together with the worship of the female deities into the Śaivite sect. The emergence of the phallic worship,[4] rather abruptly, in our time appears to be co-related with the ascendancy of the aspirations of the agricultural people. The Sun worship was developed as a sectarian cult due to the impact of the foreign people which brought new recruitments of the outlandish Maga priests into the Brāhmaṇa class.

The theologians of our times carefully developed the cult of Bhakti into a bond of synthesis of Vedic and Epic theology and, exerting considerable influence on heterodoxy, tended in course of time to merge it into the orthodox fold through the elastic theory of incarnation. The doctrine of Yoga, developed to suit both the paths of Bhakti and action, was greatly useful for incorporating the non-Vedic religious practices in the Neo-Orthodoxy. Bhakti was further evolved as a subtle mechanism of social control as well as a vehicle of socialization of cultural values. Theism gave also a new perspective to the age. It was not only made compatible to the

[1]vide *supra*, pp. 141ff; see also Kosambi, "Early Brahmins and Brahmanism," *JBBRAS*, XXIII, 1947, pp. 43ff.

[2]Kenny, L.B., "The Origin of Nārāyaṇa," *ABORI*, XXII, pp. 250f.

[3]O'Flaherty, W.D., *The Origine of Evel in Hindu Mythology*, pp. 46ff.

[4]Bhattacharya, B. *Śaivism and the Phallic World*, I, pp. 9ff.

doctrine of action but was evolved in the orthodox fold to have a spirit of thorough-going doctrinal syncretism. A host of beliefs and practices of popular character like vows, prayer, gift etc. were incorporated in the Neo-Orthodox creed. The practice of pilgrimage gained a great importance in our times. Tīrtha, instituted by the ṛṣis for the religious benefit of the poor people, betrays a number of its economic functions. Rather, a closer analysis of the myths connected with the tīrthas brings[1] out strange results. The concept of tīrthas as formulated in the Epics and the Purāṇas strongly suggests that its origin lay in the process of expansion of the agriculture in the newly colonized areas where the Neo-Vedic culture got transplanted. Although the economic factor seems to be basically responsible for the rise and growth of tīrtha, it was carefully developed as a religious institution by the Brāhmaṇa theologians. The enormous growth of tīrthas, covering almost the entire sub-continent, provides one of the positive evidences to suggest that the Epic-Purāṇic culture has broken the confines of Madhyadeśa—the traditional land of the orthodox fold even in the geo-cultural appreciation of Manu. The religious thinkers of our age, quite synchronizing with the emergence of the Agamic cult, developed temple worship as a popular institution of Neo-Orthodoxy.[2] Further, caught in the dire competition of the heterodox missionary activities, the Brāhmaṇa theologians of our age betray a proselytizing zeal in so far as they completely opened the Neo-Orthodox fold to all alike—both the Vedic or Non-Vedic people. The assertion of the validity of the Vedas has ever been a typical cultural disposition of the Brāhmaṇas, but in our age, the attempt at cultural synthesis, naturally, goes to extend the authority of the Vedas down to the popular faith, which gives the Vedas or the Vedic literature, at least in theory, an universal recognition as never before. This tendency of the authors is so keenly developed in the Epic-Purāṇic myths that the interfusion of the subtle concept of the Vedas with Bhāgavata creed takes a downright mystic character whose theological significance is hard to decipher.

The fusion of the ritualistic trend and the Upaniṣadic spiritual values does not seem to have been completed before our period and our authors occupy themselves to synthesize them in order to plug all unwarranted cultural fissures. However, the doctrine of non-violence, although integrated in Neo-Orthodoxy, could not fare well in our troubled age and the revival of the Vedic sacrifices became inevitable, which resulted partly also because of the reaction of the orthodox Brāhmaṇas against the dominance of heterodoxy. Brāhmaṇic attempts at preservation of older ritualistic tradition might have been motivated by greed, but the Gṛhya Saṃskāras were an expression of cultural fulfilment and they gave a sort of unity and rank to the twice-born classes, especially to the Brāhmaṇas.

[1]G.P. Upadhyay, 'The Origin and Functions of Tīthas. . . . . .' *IHC* (Proc.), 37th Session, Calicut, 1976, pp. 126-30.

[2]vide *supra*, pp. 65-65.

The economic motivation of the Brāhmaṇas led them to seek a fresh lease of life for Neo-Orthodoxy in the popular patronage—a process vigorously accelerated by the challenge of heterodoxy. An analysis of the myths and legends woven around the sectarian deities reveals to us the various devices of the Brāhmaṇa theologians to enlist patronage of the masses by making the attributes of deities congenial enough to the aspirations of the people at the lowest level of the Vedic fold. The Vaiṣṇava myths and rituals are formulated out of both the pastoral and agricultural elements. It gave to the attributes of Viṣṇu, and the deities allied to him, a material base rooted primarily in the agricultural milieu. In the composite Vaiṣṇava faith, the elements of Bhāgavatism are transfused substantially. The Andhaka-Vṛṣṇi and Sātvata-Bhoja septs of Yādava tribe, among whom the Vāsudeva-Kṛṣṇa legends took their origin, were looked down upon by the orthodox circles ever since the later Vedic times. But the steady ascendancy of advanced agriculture, with which they seem to be particularly connected, largely contributed to the emergence of Bhāgavatism in the Vaiṣṇava creed. The cultural transformation appears to be considerably responsible for elevating the social position of these people during the period of our study. The *Mahābhārata* and the Purāṇas recount various planes of intimate connection of the Brāhmaṇas with these people which, besides increasing the Brāhmaṇas' cultural influence on them, brought about relative changes in the social structure of the Brāhmaṇa priests. The Vaiṣṇava theology saturated with the agricultural symbolism in its rituals and myths brought about relative changes in its tenets also. The Vyuha concept, evolved into a subtle philosophical doctrine, suggests to have been originally a symbolic representation of the vegetal phases. A new dimension is added to the creed by integrating the primitive mode of adoration and offering into the Vaiṣṇava fold. This structural transformations of Vaiṣṇava ritual could be understood only as a device to win over the new social groups of lower strata of society to the Neo-Orthodox fold. As a matter of fact, a number of Vaiṣṇavite myths basically represented the techniques of proselytizing the masses who were still not fully absorbed into the mainstream of the orthodox fold. No doubt, the Brāhmaṇas' economic greed formed the vital motive in enlisting the fresh lease of patron groups; however, this alone will not explain the entire socio-economic factor at operation. The period of our study is marked by the vigorous growth of trade and commerce. The expanding agriculture, as the very core of the whole economic structure especially trade (Vārtā),[1] needed the involvment[2] of larger and larger number of people in production from the lower strata of society, and more so from the primitive masses. The theologians at times express their feeble reprobation of the coercive employment of the people as labourers in trade and agriculture.[3] Unless

[1] *Mat. P.*, 143. 72; see also ibid, Chs. 143-44.
[2] *Vāyu P.*, 39. 89-91.
[3] *Mbh.*, XII.254. 37-9.

these people were integrated, at whatsoever elementary level, into the higher society, the peaceful efflorescence of the economy could hardly have been ensured.

Despite the radical attitude of the proto-Indian people inseparably connected with the Śaivite cult, a steady process of the transformation of its creed was undertaken by the theologians of our times. The identification of a host of elements of the orthodox culture with Śiva contributed to the development of Brāhmaṇized Śrauta Pāśupata, held to be the essence of the Vedas which is contrasted with the Lākulīśo's Pāśupata of much unorthodox strains. The successive emergence of the various Śaiva sects of the Kāpālikas, Aghorīs, Kālāmukhas etc. laying their belief in the dreadful rites must have been possible on account of the uneven economic progress and the cultural advancement of the people. Their primitive rituals seem to reflect a sort of cultural protest of the deprived people against the élite's higher culture, based on the Varṇa economy. However, the Brāhmaṇas serving as the Śaivite clericals, besides transforming these sects, secured for themselves the patronage of the heterogeneous sections of the society. This process led the Brāhmaṇas to have ritual connections with the Śūdras which must have contributed to improving their social status to some extent.

The vigorous emergence of Śāktism as an independent sect towards the end of our period, seems to be a by-product of the triumph of agricultural economy at socio-cultural level whose cultic mainstay is always the mother Earth—the source of all creatures. The archaic rituals attached to this creed were attempted to be transformed or dropped out by the Brāhmaṇas of our times which is particularly marked in the description of the goddess in the Bhīṣma and Virāṭa Parvas as also in the *Harivaṃśa Purāṇa*. Despite the Brāhmanization of the Tāntric rituals, an antipathy of this sect to the orthodoxy is more than obvious. We find the Brāhmaṇa priests connected with the dreadful tantric rite of human sacrifice in subsequent times, which flourished specially on the fringes of the orthodox cultural region.

The Epic-Purāṇic theologians show an untiring zeal to evolve a composite faith by synthesizing the different cults and syncretizing the diverse tenets in Neo-Orthodoxy. The attributes of the deities symbolizing the diverse elements of nature, believed to be vital for the vegetation, gave a common significance to their functions which prepared the ground for syncretism in Neo-Orthodox creed. The Brāhmaṇa priests were as intimately connected with the pastoral society and its rituals as with those of the agricultural ones. However, they seem to have made positive contributions to the organization of production by fostering an ideology and creed congenial to the growth of agricultural economy.

The Brāhmaṇas' activity as social thinkers was of a conservative nature, directed to preserve the Varṇa structure and praise the ideal land of the orthodox fold. As the disintegration of the Varṇa society amounted to the ascendancy of the darker characteristics of the Kali age, the restoration of the Varṇāśramadharma was considered by the authors as signifying the return of the golden period of prosperity. The Brāhmaṇa law-

givers were laying down laws in a society many sections of which had not fully adopted the economy based on advanced agriculture. It seems that a large number of the tribals still clung to their quite primitive economy. It offered them hardly a bare subsistence. The Varṇa structure was taken by the orthodox circles as a solution to the social problems which could offer economic well-being to the society. The superiority of the Brāhmaṇa' position was vehemently asserted, especially in the Smṛti literature. The extra emphasis on their superior status was repeatedly sought to be conditioned on, and balanced by, the imposition of moral and puritanic standards of life on them. Some degree of change in the relative importance of the bases of status evaluation is marked, as greater accent seems to have been laid on the spiritual-status of the Brāhmaṇas than their rituals-status. Although the office of the royal chaplain was reinstituted, his position seems to have gone down. Besides adopting their time-honoured occupations and performing their traditional duties, the Brāhmaṇas also appear in our time as taking up avocations of lower ranks and, consequently, approximating themselves to the positions of the Kṣatriyas, Vaiśyas and even Śūdras. The position of the Kṣatriyas, was revitalized and the Brāhmaṇas attempted to ally more closely with the monarchy, particularly, in the process of detribalization of the primitive social strata, which extended the political power of the king over them and introduced the Varṇa structure amidst their groups. The Brāhmaṇas' bid to associate the political power with the varying processes of cultural reconstruction reveals the potent marks of the aristocratic aspirations on the Neo-Orthodox cultural ideals and values. Considerable changes had occurred in the position of the Vaiśya class also on account of the economic progress of the age. The Brāhmaṇic authors seem to have entertained some antipathy against the Buddhist leanings of the wealthier Vaiśyas. The position of the lower sections of the Vaiśyas appears to have been somewhat ambiguous, some times approximating to that of the Śūdras. The Śūdra class, comprised of heterogeneous social groups, had a complex character and created various problems for the law-givers in making them conform to the Varṇadharma. The harsh sanctions of the authors against them seem to have been made in response to the antagonistic feelings which the Śūdras entertained towards orthodoxy. But the laws bearing upon the rights of this class testifies to the fact that their general position had gone up in comparison to earlier period, more so in religious matters. However, on account of the denial of a full-fledged ritual-position to them and particularly owing to their economic disabilities, this class remained humble in our age.[1] The Brāhmaṇas evolved various measures of social, religious, and political import to curb the deviant behaviours by control techniques. Besides the use of their own moral influence in keeping the Varṇa fold functioning properly, they also sought the coercive power of the state against deviations.

[1]vide *supra*, pp. 152ff, 157ff; vide also R.S. Sharma, *Śūdras in Ancient India*, pp. 178-79.

While these measures regained social stability, their everlasting effect seems to have generated a tendency of social inhibition.

The Brāhmaṇas' attempts at social standardization and systematization were accompanied with various theoretical propositions, devised to meet emergent situations and the pressure of the non-Varṇa social elements. It is difficult to say how far the Āpaddharma provisions approximated to actual life but the laxity allowed in personal distress and cultural crisis shows a pragmatic approach to the problem of social standardization. The theory of Varṇasaṃkara, enunciated by the authors of the age, especially Manu, served as a double edged sword to curb, on the one hand deviations from the standard marriage rules and, on the other, to bring the utterly heterogeneous non-Varṇa social groups into one single social system of orthodoxy. While the various tribal units and occupational groups were being steadily incorporated within the orthodox fold, they, in turn, influenced the Varṇa structure by accelerating those tendencies which turn classes into castes. The law-givers' in principle, affirmed and accepted the change of caste, but they tended to make it increasingly rigid. The overwhelming ascendency of the feudal system, especially from the post-Gupta period onwards, was also responsible for theoretically parcelling out the society into sealed gradations. It may be said that harsh provisions instituted to preserve the social structure in the time of crisis should have been changed or modified, as was done by Yājñavalkya in relation of Manu's laws, in later times also. On the contrary, the institutes of laws representing this emergent period of Indian culture, continued to be treated as the most authoritative text for all times. As regards the problem of foreign settlement, the law-givers defined their position also in terms of the Varṇa structure, thus bringing about a process of their assimilation in the orthodox society. But, taking into consideration the contributions made by a number of factors of complex nature in the formation of the caste system, one can hardly agree with the opinion that the Brāhmaṇas perpetuated caste system only to exalt themselves and feed their pride. Further, the systematization of saṃnyāsa āśrama was completed by institutionalization of saṃnyāsa as a full-fledged stage of life within orthodoxy. In this attempt a general spirit of assertion of the social obligations and the doctrine of action is evident, especially with regard to the householder' way of life. The general attitude of the Brāhmaṇas towards the various social situations is marked by a strange blending of conservatism, but for the most part, considering the trends of the cultural ideals cherished by the orthodox society in general, and the Brāhmaṇas themselves in particular, they evinced a tolerably balanced disposition to the problems of the age.

The orthodox Brāhmaṇas had shown, it seems, some degree of reaction against the Mauryan heterodoxy. Its positive expression appears to have come through the military channel. The fact is borne by the mutually contradictory and divergent Brāhmaṇical and Buddhist traditions about Puṣyamitra Śuṅga. The end of the Mauryan rule was followed by successions

of Brāhmaṇical dynasties, which tried their best to meet the foreign inroads. Their limited military success in this direction, left over the problem to be solved socially and religiously. The Brāhmaṇical orthodoxy differed greatly from the heterodox fold in its appreciation of the dangers from foreign elements in the initial stages. The Brāhmaṇas' antipathy towards them invited oppression for themselves at their hands. But later on they came to terms with the alien people, and a process of the assimilation of the latter into the orthodox society sets in.

However, the internal transformation of orthodoxy by the Brāhmaṇas in order to lead it to a sort of Neo-Orthodoxy of a catholic nature, represented by the Epics, the Smṛtis, and the Purāṇas, was greatly facilitated on account of its positive patronage, rather championship of its cause, by the kings of the post-Mauryan age, whether belonging to the Brāhmaṇa or non-Brāhmaṇa dynasties. With the beginning of the Gupta period and the growth of the political solidarity of the country, the Neo-Orthodox religion was firmly entrenched. The lavish patronage of Samudragupta accelerated an all-round efflorescence of the Epic-Purānic culture, which in its popular appeal was quite ascendant. In fact, during the rule of the imperial Guptas we find the greatest harmony between the cultural 'ethos' of Neo-Orthodoxy and the political power.

A tendency of the secularization of the Brāhmaṇa class appears to have grown in so far as they begin to embrace secular professions of ministers, king's councillors and even join military service in greater number. Besides, it is evident by land grants made by kings of this period for the attainment of spiritual merit that a class of Brāhmaṇa feudal lords also had began to rise.

In fact, the varied roles of the Brāhmaṇas in the context of challenging situations, brought about important changes in norms, values, and the structures of social, religious, and political institutions.

The impulses of the manifold activity of the Brāhmaṇas, came undoubtedly from their traditional status, which put on them definite obligations to occupy themselves and act in accordance with the needs of society. But if we try to understand their roles in terms of their cultural 'ethos,' a degree of paradox seems to be apparent in their disposition. To the extent Vedism or the Vedic tradition was emphasized and attempted to be preserved, their cultural disposition in their response to the antagonistic challenges seems to be characterized by ethno-centricism. Their dealings in relation to the non-Varṇa people were marked by some aversion. Their rating of the ways and customs of these people by Varṇa standards makes their cultural 'ethos' Vedo-centric.[1] But as soon as we remind ourselves

[1]The term 'Vedo-centric' or 'Vedo-centrism' expresses more precisely the cultural disposition of the orthodox Brāhmaṇas. As regards the sociological import of the term it is taken to have the same meaning as 'ethno-centrism' which signifies that "view of things in which one's own group is the centre of everything and all others are scaled and rated with reference to it. Sumner and Keller, *Folkways*, p. 12f; vide Nair, *Dynamic*

of the very content of synthesized Neo-Orthodoxy, which abounds in non-Vedic cultural elements, and take into consideration their attempt to bring about the process of accommodation of the non-Vedic people of varied sorts within the orthodox fold, it would be rather a truism to say that they broke the cultural exclusiveness of puritan category, thus, unleashing quite a liberal tendency. The conscious move of the Brāhmaṇas to identify the orthodox cultural tradition with popular elements and the masses, and their own territorial mobility for economic reasons, were bound to bring about a great change in the cultural content of their fold.[1] It is obvious that Neo-Orthodoxy was far different in its content and character from the older Vedic culture. It is also noteworthy that the Brāhmaṇas' attempt in the field of cultural transformations seems to have been closely associated with their supreme concern to establish an orderly state of society. It can be said that as the custodians of culture they endeavoured "to grasp both the sources of stability and the seeds of change"—one of the most challenging tasks to all thinkers of all times.

Brāhmaṇas' roles in the context of meeting the challenges of the antagonistic forces were successful, partly because they were able to make their cause common with that of the political power, and partly, on account of their ingenious acceptance of the psycho-cultural dictates of the typical Indian masses, whose active involvement in the economic life was vital to sustain the social structure; although, besides their own moral influence, the institutionalization of a mass of theoretical provisions and mythologically evolved cultural indoctrination helped the Brāhmaṇas in their task of the acculturation of people. From orthodox Vedism to Neo-Orthodoxy, a steady process of Indianization is more than conspicuous, which was, under the pressure of historical forces, carefully conducted and purposefully directed by the Brāhmaṇas of our period.

Brahmin, p. 155. Again, this term emotionally, "finds expression in sympathetic awareness and approval of the one's own fellows and their ways . . . as per contra in a feeling of fear, suspicion and contempt towards outsiders and their ways." vide *ESS*, V, Under Ethno-Centrism.

[1]see Edward Hyams, *Soil and Civilization*, New York, 1952, p. 138.

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35 line 8	constant consistant	constant and consistant
40 line 12	Pañcarātra Sastra	Pañcarātra Sattra
55 line 31	ingenius	ingenious
62 line 9	Kapila	Kapilā
68 line 37	ingenius	ingenious
110 line 16	preceived	perceived
110 line fn. 1	Basn	Basin
113 line fn. 14	Taneśvara	Thāneśvara
145 line 10	enternal	eternal
160 line 9	kṣatriya's son from a or	*delete*, or
164 line 18	viruous	virtuous
165 line 6	Schythians	Scythians
189 line 10	Nārada	Narāyaṇa
207 line 20	be able admit	be able to admit
208 like 25	Sircar	Mookerji
228 line 9 & 80	Exemption from revenue	Exemption from revenue and
234 fn. 3	*Origine of Evel*	*Origins of Evil*